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Iowa: Barnyard of the Candidates

STEVEN MARCUS: PORN THROUGH THE AGES • ROBERT BRUSTEIN: 'LES LIAISONS DANGEREUSES'

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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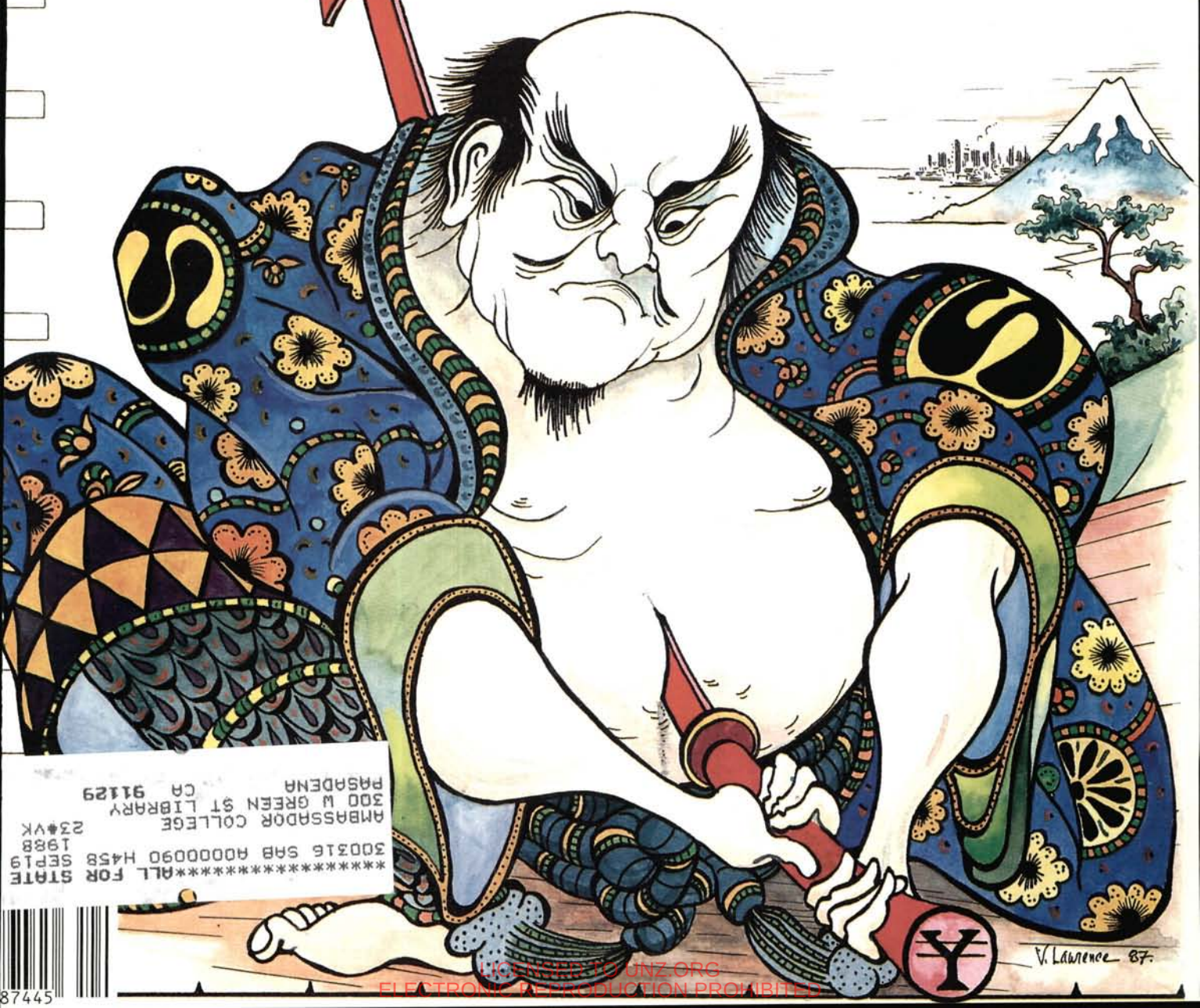
Japan's Death Yen

Our economy isn't the only one in trouble



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CORRESPONDENCE

THE GENERATIONAL RIP-OFF

To the editors:

In "The Patrimony Society" (May 11) Robert Kuttner misrepresents the generational equity movement. His thesis is that the growing affluence of the elderly is helping to cause greater class inequities among the young. In Kuttner's words, "The children of the economic haves are far better able to compensate for the generational rip-off than the children of have-nots." Contrary to what Kuttner implies, we couldn't agree more. He wants to "limit entitlements to those who need them," hike "opportunity outlays for young people without family wealth," and "tax large inherited wealth." AGE Research Director Phil Longman and I have been promoting these "new ideas" for two years now; Longman most recently called for boosting inheritance taxes in the March 30 TNR ("Deathbed Politics").

We're surprised Kuttner didn't zero in on property tax relief measures like Proposition 13, loopholes that allow the older homeowners to escape paying taxes on their unearned wealth (thereby helping to subsidize inheritances) while causing all young homeowners to pay higher tax rates. We'll look for this idea in his next article.

PAUL S. HEWITT
Americans for Generational Equity
Washington, D.C.

Robert Kuttner replies:

AGE is obsessed with the minor inequalities created by social transfers, and is splendidly oblivious to the more extreme inequalities created by the market. As egalitarians, why not redistribute from rich to poor among both the retired population *and* the working age population, instead of trumping up generational conflict? Longman called not for higher inheritance taxes, but for taxing back Medicare benefits, which is entirely different. An eloquent rebuttal to AGE's entire premise can be found in the American Gerontological Society's book *Ties That Bind: The Interdependence of Generations* by Eric Kingson.

Proposition 13, of course, has nothing to do with the case, but since the issue came up, I can't resist plugging my first book, *Revolt of the Haves* (1979), a critique of Proposition 13.

HART MONITORS

To the editors:

Fire him, was the November 28, 1970, verdict on J. Edgar Hoover that TNR seemed to support upon learning that his FBI had been snooping into Martin Luther King's sex life. Today, yet another bunch of nooky monitors surfaces, this time employees not of the FBI but of the *Miami Herald*, and TNR stalwarts are all for them. Why the change?

No doubt you can come up with some reason to explain how the two cases are entirely different. Michael Kinsley, for one (TRB, "On the Zipper Beat," May 25), has already presented the charming theory that presidential candidates' sex drives are proper matters of public concern because too much of that sort of thing might lead to war. Someone who would write that should have no trouble explaining how a bunch of feds bugging motel rooms is not to be confused with a bunch of reporters hiding in bushes. Well, here's my theory, which labors under the disadvantage of being obvious: the difference is that Hoover was not the press. With a few honorable exceptions—mostly in the *New York Times*—you people are sticking together, despite or because of a widespread nausea over what some of your colleagues have done.

JOHN GORDON
Mystic, Connecticut

FIGURE AGAIN

To the editors:

In the Notebook item "Go Figure" (May 18) there is a comparison wherein on April 15 the *Washington Post* says the Reagans "paid $92,460 in federal income taxes for last year, 27.5 percent of their adjusted gross income of $336,640" versus the *New York Times* statement of the same day that "the Reagans' total tax bill was $123,517. That was more than 36 percent of their total income of $336,640." Where is the contradiction? Or doesn't it make sense that one's total tax bill would be higher than one's federal income tax?

DON CONDON
Yosemite, California

TODAY'S HEADLINES AREN'T JUST ON THE FRONT PAGE...

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FROM WASHINGTON

On And On

In London to determine whether any of the candidates for prime minister has ever committed adultery, I discover that the sex issue has preceded me. "STEEL ATTACKS 'SMEARS, LIES AND SLANDERS' " was the main headline in the London *Times* the first day of the British election campaign. Another newspaper had accused Liberal Party leader David Steel of . . . what, exactly? Under the influence of Britain's absurd libel laws, the *Times* story discussed the "allegations" in every aspect except their content. The only hint was a statement from Steel that the charges had "hurt two of our closest friends."

The other papers all followed the same eerie convention in their news coverage, but the *Independent* let slip in a stuffy, dismissive editorial that Steel had been "linked with the wife of a former Liberal Party chairman." The story soon disappeared, because hardly anyone believed it. The evidence was slight, and Steel is a mousy character who strikes no one as a womanizer.

But a much better sex story then emerged, with the additional advantage of being true. A Conservative member of Parliament named Harvey Proctor had to drop out of the election after pleading guilty to hiring "rent boys" for spanking sessions. ("SHAME OF SPANKING HARVEY" headlined the *Evening Standard*.) He paid them to enact rituals in which he would pretend to be a schoolteacher punishing them for misbehaving in class. This accords so well with sniggering foreign stereotypes about the British in general, and British stereotypes about Tories in particular, that it's almost reassuring.

Indeed, just about the only hope that British voters won't reinstall Margaret Thatcher for a third term as prime minister is the widespread feeling that she gets a bit too much pleasure out of administering the firm smack of discipline to the society she governs. The first gaffe of the campaign was Thatcher's chilling remark, in response to a question about a *fourth* term, that she intended to "go on and on." Some thrill to such talk ("Oh, *more*, Madam, *more, please!*"), but others don't. The opposition parties are trying to combine Thatcher's icy personality with the unemployment rate—currently 11 percent—to create an issue of a society lacking in fair play, decency, and other treasured British qualities.

Trouble is, there's no denying Thatcher's accomplishments. The British economy is currently growing faster than our own or Germany's or even Japan's. And unlike the Reagan boom in this country, which was financed on MasterCard, there is evidence that Britain's is based on a genuine recharging of the economic batteries. The government and trade deficits are trivial.

The Tories' favorite boast is that more Britons now own shares of stock than belong to unions—a dramatic reversal. They argue that Thatcher has restructured her nation like a sick company, changed the corporate culture, and ended the world's longest-running economic soap opera: the decline of Britain. Opponents demur, and contend that in any event the changes have been needlessly wrenching and divisive, with many individuals, groups, and regions left behind. And just as Thatcher's boasts are more valid than Reagan's, the charges of her critics are also more valid than similar complaints heard in America. More important politically, Thatcher doesn't have Reagan's charm to fall back on. She makes a more convincing ogre.

The party leaders hold sequential press conferences in London every weekday morning of the campaign. At one of these David Owen, leader of the Social Democrats, accused Thatcher of promoting "the WIIFM factor," pronounced "wiffim" and standing for "What's In It For Me?" The SDP, a Labour spin-off, is joined with the Liberals as "the Alliance." The Alliance presents itself as a modern, pragmatic, nonideological, American-style party for the new classless Britain. In American political shorthand, it is neoliberal, full of worthy but uninspiring notions such as "portable discounts for council housing." ("Something has *got* to be done, by the way, about the public telephones," said

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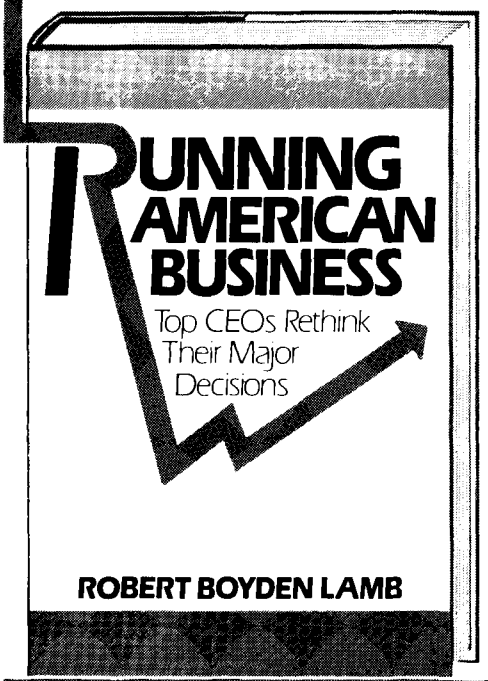
Robert B. Reich salutes a different kind of management book:



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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JUNE 15, 1987

THE BIG SWITCH

Japan and the United States are going through a gigantic and painful role reversal. The United States, formerly the wealthiest nation on earth, has become the biggest debtor. Japan, for 40 years America's economic and geopolitical junior partner, has become the world's (and America's) biggest creditor. This switch is bound to have political and psychological ramifications. Debtors classically go hat-in-hand to their creditors, and feel resentment about it. Debtors who are used to being No. 1 feel the resentment even more deeply. The strain is showing on both sides of the Pacific.

Over here, Japan is portrayed as an economic imperialist, seeking to conquer the world with exports with the same ferocity and guile it once brought to warfare. That mental image is behind trade sanctions such as those imposed by the administration for alleged Japanese failure to live up to an agreement limiting trade in semiconductors. It is also behind the presidential campaign theme of Representative Richard Gephardt, who tells audiences that "the next president must be as tough in negotiating the terms of trade as President Reagan has been in negotiating with the Russians." Whether Gephardt means to or not, he's encouraging the public to transfer its attitude of rivalry and fear from the Soviet Union, a real enemy, to Japan, our friend and fellow democracy.

On Japan's side, there's a mixed sense of resentment, threat, and pride. Japan-bashing from here breeds America-bashing over there. One sign is that respectable authors and publishing houses are producing best-selling books with titles like *The Secret of Jewish Power to Control the World*, which apparently are as much anti-American as they are anti-Semitic, blaming American Jews for a perceived American plot to undercut Japan's economic and cultural vitality. Among Japanese politicians, the semiconductor sanctions were alleged to be an example of scapegoating by the United States, which is now often portrayed as a one-time juggernaut gone flaccid and self-indulgent. Before an audience of young nationalists last year, even America's friend Yasuhiro Nakasone was moved to explain the rise of Japan and the decline of America in terms of racial purity. He apologized for it, but he said it.

The danger is that resentments and rivalries will multiply and break up what has been and could continue to be one of the world's great productive partnerships. A war between the world's military superpowers is most unlikely; unfortunately, the odds are higher for a trade war between the economic superpowers that would leave the world economy in a shambles and even open the way to real wars. Congress right now is debating trade legislation that probably will not include the Gephardt amendment (which calls for automatic sanctions against Japan and other countries that run chronic trade surpluses with the United States). But Congress probably will pass a measure with "procedural protectionism" included, reducing the president's discretion in deciding whether to grant "relief" from foreign competition to threatened U.S. industries. President Reagan, who gives free trade sermons on Sunday but practices protectionism on weekdays, just might sign a "moderate" trade bill.

That alone would not bring down the world economy, but Congress is acting with terrible timing. It is enacting legislation designed to correct U.S. trade deficits built up in an environment of an overvalued dollar. But the dollar has dropped precipitately—70 percent against the yen since early 1985—which ultimately will make U.S. products cheaper and imports more expensive and begin to correct the trade deficit. Meanwhile, the strengthening of the yen will make imports less expensive in Japan, curb the country's ability to export, and encourage industry to move offshore (to the United States, among other places). That will cost Japanese jobs and encourage protectionism over there. The danger is that both countries will restrict trade—both as a result of political pressures at home and retaliation for the other side's protectionism. *That* could produce a world recession. So could a decision on the part of the Japanese (motivated either by short-term economic thinking or resentment) to stop investing in U.S. securities. That would force a rise in interest rates and slow down the U.S. economy, whose deficit spending has been the locomotive of the world economy for the last five years.

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Fortunately there is a strong will in both countries to resist temptations toward hostility. Polls show that the public in each nation holds the other in high esteem. The political elites in Japan believe in *kokusaika*, or internationalism, which means both reaching out more to the world (the easier part politically) and letting more of the world in. Japan is planning to double its foreign aid by 1990, and by 2000 will devote more GNP to it than the United States does. It has inched up its defense spending to just over one percent of GNP, and spends $30,000 in support costs for each American stationed there, the highest of any ally. Nakasone just pledged $30 billion over five years in lending to Latin American and Asian debtors, taking up a burden that the United States finds increasingly difficult to bear. Even though the dollar is down, Japan has also maintained its lending to the No. 1 debtor; the Japanese bought up 47 percent of the latest American Treasury bill offering. Its usual share is under 40 percent.

Japan is justifiably under constant pressure from the outside—and not just from the United States—to open up its markets, and there is some progress. Nakasone has also promised to stimulate the Japanese economy with $35 billion in tax cuts and public works projects that will add power to the world economy. What's most needed in Japan is structural reform. Instead of subsidizing agricultural interests and thus keeping land prices astronomically high, Japan needs tax reform and a housing boom that will provide its own people with adequate places to live. (Currently the average Japanese occupies half the space of an average American.) This will also give the Japanese something to spend their enormous savings on, and provide an internal market for their wonderful stereos and TV sets—maybe even some of ours, too. Japan, in other words, needs to become more of a consumer/importer society and less of a saver/exporter. It needs to become more like us. Its modernist elites seem to recognize the fact. Its cultural traditionalists resist change. It will be much easier for the former to prevail if they are not seen to be bending to pressure from a hostile America.

Meanwhile, America needs to change, too, and become more like Japan. The good news is that almost all of the 1988 presidential candidates—protectionists included—

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart
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5.	SOUTH PACIFIC	—	1
6.	A SORROW AND A PITY	—	1
7.	DONOVAN'S RIFF	—	1
8.	TEST TUBE	—	1
9.	DAT OLD-TIME RELIGION	—	1
10.	RABBIT PUNCHES	—	1

1. STARK'S NAKED POLICY

The Stark. The debate over the *Stark* catastrophe—what exactly is our Gulf policy?—echoes the debate that followed the murder of Marines in Beirut. What exactly our Beirut policy was went unresolved, of course. The culture maintains an outlook based on its long-standing faith in its firepower.

2. RON'S HEADROOM

Iranamok. It was what didn't happen in the hearings last week that stands out: Reagan's about-face on what he knew of *contra* aid made no impact on the public investigation. No constitutional confrontation seems to be taking shape; these hearings are about snow tires.

3. DEBTORS' RISEN

The debt crisis. Citicorp's decision to write off $3 billion in bad Third World debts may head off world financial collapse scenarios. Will it also head off any real debate about the wisdom of the international aid policy—and its effects?

4. SKIN DEEP

AIDS. Several health workers have now contracted AIDS through skin contact with contaminated blood. Though this may not be anomalous, it feeds the widely held fear that AIDS can indeed be transferred by means other than sex and needles. It is also likely to encourage AIDS discrimination. Meanwhile, everyone seems to be catching on to AIDS's coming economic costs, an estimated $1 billion in New York alone.

5. SOUTH PACIFIC

Fiji. The media mystery of the week is the Fiji revolt. It has gotten far more detailed attention than the governmental crisis in Italy, to cite only one contrast. The story is being played straight, but it's hard not to see some irony in the very bulk of the coverage: there's trouble in paradise, too.

6. A SORROW AND A PITY

Barbie. Klaus Barbie's dramatic exit from his French trial has disappointed onlookers, particularly the media. Barbie's fate is certain, but the exit apparently cancels putting France itself on trial—a major angle—and greatly diminishes the trial's emotional drama.

7. DONOVAN'S RIFF

Donovan. Is there a post-Hart press era taking shape? When William Donovan answered a reporter's "tasteless" question with "Go to hell," it was as if he were taking his cue directly from those who demanded the press be put in its place. Could be happening.

8. TEST TUBE

TV. Vietnam is coming to television via an ensemble combat show called "Tour of Duty." Its way has clearly been prepared by *Platoon*, but the show's success, and how it treats the Vietnam experience, could be an important litmus test of how the culture has digested the war. That Vietnam is the backdrop for a TV show is itself a milestone.

9. DAT OLD-TIME RELIGION

Home entertainment. VCR sales may be peaking, but yet another fight over home entertainment technology is under way. DAT, digital tape recording, features such high-quality sound that only one person will ever have to buy a recording again; everyone else will just copy it. This is precisely the argument that greeted audiocassettes and VCRs. Nor is it the last fight between such new and "old" technology.

10. RABBIT PUNCHES

Home runs. Explaining the greatly increased number of home runs in recent seasons has become a cottage industry. Sports pages are dotted with dissections of the new "rabbit" ball, the implication being a conspiracy to enliven the game. The best theory is more boring, however: old pitching staffs facing better conditioned hitters.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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are calling for a lower budget deficit, more saving, increased productivity, investment in education and research, and longer-term economic planning. They all want America to be No. 1 again, and the wise ones understand that we will have to get there by our own efforts, and not by dragging down and freezing out No. 2. Between No. 1 and No. 2 there does have to be some tough negotiating, but in every case it ought to be to open up world trade and not to form U.S.-Japan cartels. It ought to be to adjust the burdens of a changed partnership, in which the United States still has the dominant role in keeping the world militarily at peace, but in which the Japanese employ economic power (preferably through multinational channels) to keep the world growing and politically safe. Inevitably, in any partnership, the richer one is likely to be the more influential. If we don't want Japan telling us what to do, we had best stop whining and start producing.

NOTEBOOK

□ ACQUIRED JOURNALISTIC DEFICIENCY SYNDROME:

AIDS cases may be on the decline

"...And the finding doesn't mean AIDS cases will decline."

—*USA Today*, weekend edition, May 16-18

□ MEGABLURBS: Our "Nothing Succeeds Like Excess" contest announced in the May 4 issue has produced a worthy winner. The contest was inspired by *Hammer*, the biography of Dr. Armand Hammer that was so heavily laden with blurbs from famous celebrities we thought it worth honoring. We asked for book jackets or advertisements bursting with fulsome praise. Bruce Klein of Forest Hills, New York, sent our way the 1984 paperback edition of John Naisbitt's *Megatrends*. The ten pages of tribute from 47 people makes *Hammer* look positively self-effacing. "Super-researched," gushed *European Regional Magazine*. "Insightful and Inciteful," said Kirk Hanson of Stanford Graduate School of Business, and the ever discerning Hugh Sidey called *Megatrends* "first-rate." Dick Gephardt weighed in with a plug, as did Gary Hart. Former Virginia Governor Charles Robb was so inspired by the book that he promised to appoint a committee to study the future. Mr. Klein will be rewarded with a complimentary copy of *Hammer*.

□ PEACE AND LIFE . . . AND SHUT UP: Salvadoran president José Napoleón Duarte was supposed to make a speech before the World Affairs Council of Northern California on May 1, but it was canceled when a group called the Coalition for Peace and Life in El Salvador promised to send 1,000 demonstrators to protest his appearance. The coalition, made up of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), Pledge of Resistance, and other groups opposing U.S. policy in Central America, claimed afterward to the radical newspaper the *Guardian* that the cancellation was "a real victory for the solidarity movement in this country. It's a clear indication that we are effective." The issue here isn't whether President Reagan's Central America policies are right or wrong, but whether they can be openly discussed. If the Coalition for Peace and Life in El Salvador is serious about its name, it should recognize that free debate is prerequisite for peace and life in the United States as well as El Salvador.

Could yuppies save Europe?

MARSHALL ARTS

"I NEED NOT tell you, gentlemen, that the world situation is very serious." With this characteristically laconic observation, George C. Marshall began his commencement address at Harvard on June 5, 1947, in which he made the offer to the devastated countries of Europe that quickly took shape as the Marshall Plan, perhaps the single greatest triumph of American foreign policy in this century. The 40th anniversary of this initiative is being observed in celebrations from Washington to various European capitals; June has already been proclaimed George Catlett Marshall Month. It is doubtful that America could find such vision today, or implement it so effectively and promptly.

When Dean Acheson, who was undersecretary of state at the time, called his memoirs *Present at the Creation*, he was referring to the creative years of American foreign policy under Harry S Truman. In the late 1940s the foundations were laid for a prosperous and democratic Western Europe; America's allies in Europe were secured against Russian invasion, encroachment, and subversion; and the first explorative but enduring structure of a united European community was put in place. The three main stepping-stones were the announcement of the Truman Doctrine in 1947; the institution of the Marshall Plan in 1948; and the formation of NATO in 1949. What was created, in short, was the world order that by and large still exists, and has so far prevented an annihilating war between the two superpowers.

The Truman Doctrine and NATO were more or less conventional initiatives. But the Marshall Plan was an inspired invention. It offered massive economic aid to Europe in novel ways for imaginative and far-reaching ends. Marshall's brief speech galvanized Europe into action, offering a desperately needed economic lifeline *if* the European nations agreed to come together to plan, cooperate, and work toward their own recovery.

In the speech there was no reference to the Soviet Union, its satellite countries, or any Communist threat. "Our policy," Marshall explicitly said, "is directed not against any country or doctrine," and he added: "The program should be a joint one, agreed to by a number of, *if not all*, European

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nations." So when Ernest Bevin, the British foreign secretary, and Georges Bidault, his opposite number in France, responded to the speech, they invited 22 nations to send representatives to Paris to draw up a cooperative recovery plan—including the Soviet Union and the nations of the Communist bloc. Czechoslovakia accepted, but within a few days Russia had forced it to reverse its decision. Nothing was more dismaying at the time than this evidence that Russia intended the Iron Curtain to be so impenetrable that its satellites could not cooperate with the rest of Europe in a plan for rebuilding the continent. They were no longer to be part of the European community.

THE INVITATIONS were issued on July 3. Only nine days later the representatives of 16 nations assembled in Paris. The Marshall Plan began officially when Congress approved the Economic Cooperation Act on April 3, 1948, and it was successfully ended on December 31, 1951. In that brief time, Western Europe was transformed. Those who were not there may read, look at photographs, watch documentaries. But when they gaze on Western Europe today, how can they believe that in 1947 it was on the verge not only of economic collapse, but of complete social and political disintegration?

If anything, the situation had deteriorated since 1945. Even after two years of peace, Europe did not have the bare necessities, especially food and fuel, with which to start on the road to recovery. The cities had not been rebuilt; industries had not been revived. There wasn't the coal to produce the steel needed for reconstruction; there wasn't the steel to rebuild the mines to produce the coal. Beyond the physical destruction, the institutions of a complex modern international economy had in many cases disappeared.

In the cities were millions of homeless, their houses and apartments in ruins, and the threat of starvation was growing. And there were millions of displaced persons, who seemed to have lost their identities with their homelands. Apart from these dire cases, one got used to seeing on the streets all over Europe whole populations who were undernourished, threadbare, hollow-eyed. We watched fearfully every election, especially in France and Italy, with their then-strong Communist parties. Even calm observers talked of the possibility of revolution.

Then came the Marshall Plan, and by 1951 it was as if a wand had been waved over the Continent. In place of the devastation Western Europe looked almost spruce. New homes had risen from the ruins. The new modern factories were busy. Agriculture had dramatically increased its product beyond even the pre-war level. The general standard of living was relatively high and improving. The food and clothing stores were well stocked and thronged. The Continent, except for the Russian satellites, was bustling. Even the "economic miracles" of West Germany and France had begun. The network of an international economy had been restored. The Federal Republic of Germany was created, and so re-entered the European community. The later merging of basic elements of the French and German economies heralded an enduring peace between the two historic nations; and the foundations of the European Common Market were laid.

All of these and other steps toward greater unity and cooperation in Western Europe, in place of the national rivalries that had torn the Continent for centuries, were the direct result of the fundamental stipulation by Marshall that the European nations should make their recovery a joint enterprise. The Plan was far more than a supreme act of American generosity. It was statesmanship.

The program was administered from America by the Economic Cooperation Administration, headed by a businessman and Republican, Paul Hoffman, the president of Studebaker. In Europe the ECA's special representative was W. Averell Harriman. The Western European countries were under tremendous pressure from the Americans to abandon the restrictive trade barriers of centuries. The aid went to individual countries, but only insofar as their plans had been approved by the ECA and fit into the greater plan for the general recovery of the Continent.

To this end, American missions of economic advisers, labor representatives, and technical experts were established in the capitals of all the Marshall Plan countries. They were not the kinds of men who sought a high profile, and yet one was very aware of their presence and their activity. They seemed to be ambassadors of a civilization that was not only technically progressive and efficient, but that, more unexpectedly to Europeans, had developed a class of men of political intelligence and diplomatic skills, including a necessary sensitivity to the feelings of Europeans in their dependence on the Americans.

At the same time, dozens of teams of European managers, technicians, and workers toured American steel mills, automobile plants, textile mills, and other industries to study American technical and management methods. American businesses freely passed on detailed knowledge of their technology, and even opened their books to the European visitors. Yet the emphasis was on Europe's own effort. American aid funds met the critical needs, while the Europeans conducted their own huge investment program to increase production. It was estimated that every dollar of aid generated six dollars of capital formation.

HOW DID it come about? There is no need to emphasize the contribution of Marshall, the soldier-statesman, with his erect, impassive bearing, who seems never to have conceived his position in terms of personal interest, but only of his duty to serve the civilian authority of his country, unfailingly loyal to his presidents, and, it should be emphasized, obedient to the will of Congress. Marshall never took shortcuts, and it is the example of men like him that makes one despair at the decline of public honor in America, and its acceleration under the present administration.

The leadership of Truman also needs little emphasis: his commitment to the Plan from the start; his resolve in getting it through a Republican Congress (he asked for $17 billion, and got $13.3 billion); his active part in the efforts of the Committee for the Marshall Plan to educate

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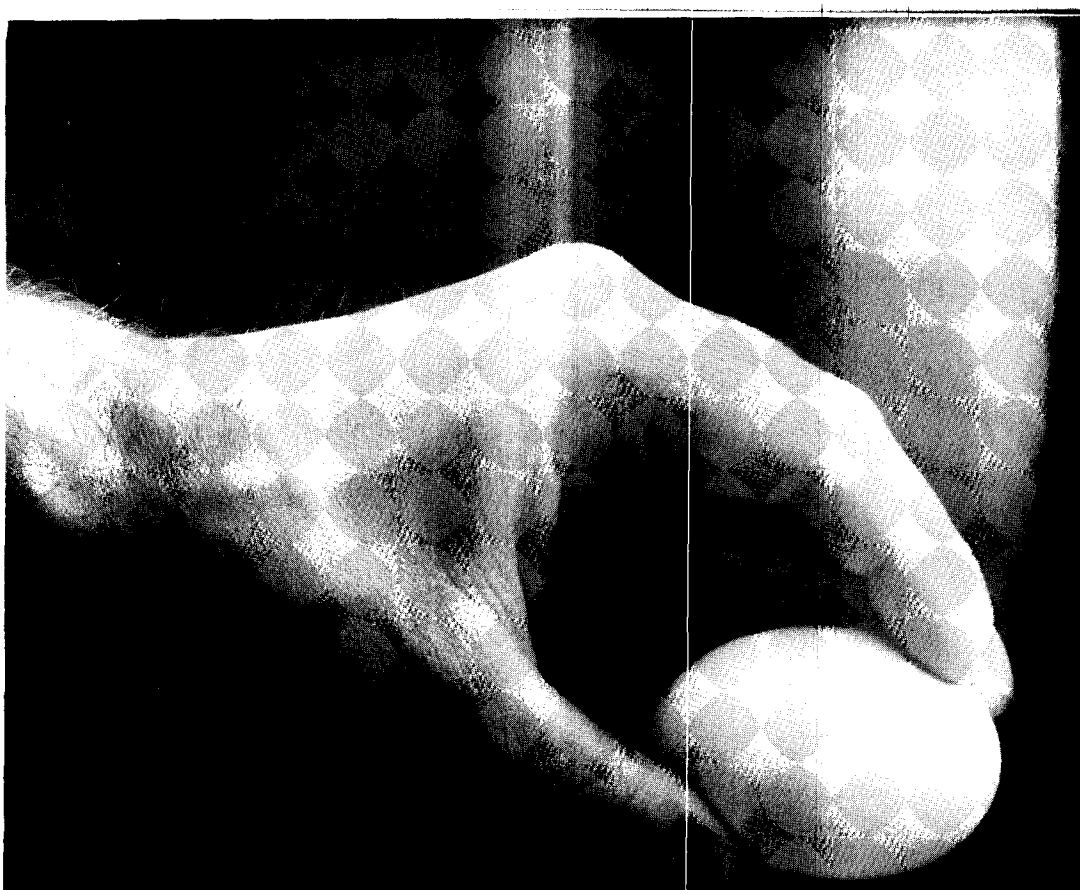

MAKING OMELETS WITHOUT BREAKING EGGS

It's impossible. But many things once thought impossible have become routine through technological advance. For example, a great amount of progress is being made in new technologies to burn coal cleanly.

Since 1973, air pollution resulting from coal combustion has fallen considerably, even as America has turned increasingly to coal for electric power and other important energy needs. However, existing clean coal technologies—stack gas scrubbing and coal washing—are limited in their ability to meet future clean air requirements, because of cost and applicability. *Emerging new coal-use techniques will expand the number of options available to coal users—current and future.*

Clean coal technology is hundreds of advances in science and engineering along with the creativity to put them together into workable, affordable systems. Clean coal technology will allow America to use more coal in the future. Cleanly and economically.

Today, there are advanced coal utilization schemes of several kinds. Some will allow older coal-fired boilers to be rebuilt as cleaner, more efficient units. Other advances apply to coal-fired units that will be built in the future. Clean coal technology is more than a concept. Most of these new technologies already have been proved in laboratories and in pilot plants. *Now they are proving themselves in full-scale demonstration programs, the last step toward full commercialization.*

Commercial demonstration projects are moving at an exciting pace. American industry is investing large sums of money. In many cases, state and federal funds supplement this effort. Not all clean coal projects will succeed. But many will. And these will form the basis for our next generation of coal-fired power plants and industrial boilers, both new units and rebuilt older ones.

This investment of money and time is a sound one. The payoff in future environmental quality and economic vitality is great. Consolidation Coal is very proud of its involvement in these coal use technologies for the future. To learn more about this subject, write for our free booklet, "A Clean Coal Technology Primer." It won't help you make omelets, but it will tell you about some new ideas that are being hatched.

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the leaders of public opinion around the country; and his readiness to ask the people for sacrifices, as in a personal broadcast plea to them to reduce their consumption of food so that more grains and meat could be sent to Europe.

Immediately after Marshall's speech the administration brought Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, the Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, into its councils. For months Vandenberg labored to persuade his colleagues on the Hill to support not only the Plan, but the emergency appropriations to enable Europe to hold on until the Plan had been passed. Few administrations have been more brashly Democratic than Truman's—and 1948 was an election year—yet it sought and found this collaboration with Vandenberg and other Republican leaders, such as Everett Dirksen and Karl Mundt.

Then there were the permanent officials of the State Department. However much credit must be given to Marshall, Acheson, and the "wise men," behind them, and vitally engaged at every step, was a State Department and foreign service that had not yet been disrupted by two influences. The first was Joe McCarthy, whose accusation of treason destroyed much of the experienced talent and confidence of the men in the State Department and foreign service. The second was the rise of the National Security Council, which began during Eisenhower's administration, to replace the State Department as the proper adviser of the president on foreign affairs. The consequences were predictable, and now dismally obvious.

The business community and their representatives in Congress often tried to turn the Marshall Plan to their own advantage, by insisting, for example, that 50 percent of all commodities should be carried in American shipping; or, to appease the flour millers, that 25 percent of all wheat shipments should be in flour. But partly through the Plan's administrator, Paul Hoffman, the business community on the whole came round to a more enlightened view of the program.

LASTLY, and perhaps above all, there was the mood of the American people. Confident after the war, generous, even idealistic, aware of their good fortune, and believing they had the responsibility to extend it to other peoples, they eventually aligned themselves behind the Marshall Plan with remarkable certainty. The Marshall Plan took 11 cents of every federal dollar. Today the total budget for foreign affairs takes only five cents. In the Second World War and its aftermath was the evidence that you cannot incite a people to be selfish in their lives at home, and then expect them to make sacrifices for their country abroad. The Marshall Plan was not founded on sentimental idealism; the stipulation that Europeans should cooperate and work for their own recovery was always there. But the countless Americans who worked at home and abroad to make the Marshall Plan a success, of which the stability of Western Europe now is the monument, would today be in law firms and corporation headquarters.

HENRY FAIRLIE

The Third World debt can be paid.

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

THE REALITIES of the so-called debt crisis are often ignored, possibly because powerful political and commercial interests both in the West and in the Third World have a stake in overlooking them. Third World debtors could readily meet their obligations, but they would be foolish to do so as long as they are not being pressed. The decision by Citicorp bank to write off $3 billion in foreign loans relieves the pressure further.

Third World debt is sovereign debt, owed or guaranteed by governments. The debtors can always pay, since governments can tax their citizens. They also generally have substantial marketable assets, and they can requisition the assets of their citizens. The sovereign debtor cannot be taken to courts. Payment depends on the government's willingness, which depends on the political and economic consequences of the decision. Governments try to avoid the political and economic costs until the consequences of default outweigh them. The most important adverse consequence would be the failure to secure further external finance, which could result in economic breakdown. In the current climate, such an outcome is improbable. Debtors feel little incentive to pay.

The statistics bandied about on Third World debt sound frightening. But the figures of hundreds of billions of dollars are misleading. It is rarely made clear whether the figures are gross or net—that is, whether they allow for the financial assets of the debtors, let alone for other marketable assets. And it is often left unspecified what debts are being discussed. Some statistics refer to debt to the banks; others include debts to Western governments and international organizations such as the International Development Association (IDA). These are unindexed loans of 50-year maturity with ten-year grace periods at zero interest. Although termed loans, they are effectively grants. Yet they are included in Third World debt. Debts owed to Western governments are usually subsidized loans under foreign aid programs. They are often scaled down or written off by the creditors cum donors.

The assets of the debtors are rarely mentioned in polite international society—even large liquid assets that in many cases run into billions of dollars. Petroleos de Venezuela, the Venezuelan state oil monopoly, was recently reported to have billions of dollars in financial assets held in the United States. The government of Peru, an intransigent debtor, recently refused to pay a few million dollars of interest on its external debts. Its foreign reserves are about $1.2 billion.

Liquid reserves aside, the major debtors also have large marketable assets. In 1983 Pemex, the state-owned Mexican oil monopoly, earned $5.3 billion. It is widely believed that if it were managed privately the earnings would have been much larger. But even at $5.3 billion the capital value

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of Pemex could then be conservatively valued at between $35 billion and $40 billion. The sovereign debt of Mexico was around $80 billion. The sale or pledge of part of Pemex might well have averted the Mexican debt crisis; it would have shown the readiness of the government to meet its obligations.

It is often argued that the sale or pledging of debtors' assets in response to demands by creditors would infringe on national sovereignty. But why should the use of assets to honor obligations arising from borrowing have this effect? In both world wars the British government pledged some of its own securities and requisitioned those of its citizens for sale without this being regarded as infringement of its sovereignty.

Another issue rarely mentioned in polite society is the disposition of the many billions borrowed by the Third World debtors. (See "Where the Money Went" by James S. Henry, April 14, 1986.) Many governments have spent hugely on prestige projects, on unviable industrialization, on politically motivated subsidies, and on other undertakings designed to keep the rulers in power.

DEBTOR GOVERNMENTS typically restrict the inflow of equity capital, and reserve for themselves or their nationals a large part of the equity in large parts of their economies. For instance, Brazil, Mexico, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Tanzania—all debtor nations—ban foreign participation in much or all of the economy. These restrictions are maintained or even extended amid rescheduling negotiations and the pleas of debtors about their inability to pay. The restrictions have promoted reliance on bank finance and official foreign aid. They also obstruct the enterprise, know-how, and skills that usually accompany the inflow of equity.

World Bank statistics suggest strongly that, as a percentage of GNP, neither the total outstanding sovereign debt of the major borrowers nor the interest and principal payments are particularly high by historical standards. In 1983 the GNP of the major Third World debtors was more than three times their sovereign debt, without allowing for reserves. Interest on the debt was about 2.3 percent of GNP and total debt service about 3.9 percent. As a percentage of export earnings, interest payments were about 12.9 percent and total debt service about 22 percent. Most of these ratios are significantly lower than they were, say, for Canada and Argentina on the eve of World War I, when these countries were first-class debtors.

The major debtor governments often preside over some of the most prosperous Third World economies. According to World Bank statistics, the income per capita of Mexico in 1984 was over $2,000, that of Brazil over $1,700, and that of Venezuela over $3,400. In 1985, often cited as a critical year for Brazil, the largest Third World debtor, automobile sales totaled about a million units, a near all-time record. In the same year both the earnings and the dividend of Petrobras, the state-controlled oil monopoly, were almost certainly all-time highs. The cost of the construction of Abuja, the new capital of Nigeria, being built from scratch, exceeds the total sovereign debt of that country. The same is almost certainly true for Brasília in Brazil and for Dodoma in Tanzania. Such countries don't have to resort to anything remotely resembling policies of austerity to pay their debts. They could simply sell state-owned or -controlled companies, reduce the more extravagant forms of public spending, lift restrictions on the inflow of equity capital, and adopt more market-oriented policies.

It is sometimes argued that adverse external changes warrant substantial concessions to the debtors, and even additional transfers. It is obviously improvident to assume a country will never encounter economic setbacks. But a prudent government would accumulate foreign-exchange reserves in good times to meet its commitments in bad times. Much current discussion implies that Third World governments can be expected to behave like children with no thought for tomorrow. The possibility of setting aside reserves in prosperity is rarely mentioned. The major debtors, including Mexico, Brazil, and Venezuela, among others, enjoyed sustained prosperity from 1945 through 1980. But in contrast with Hong Kong and Taiwan, for example, they did not set aside reserves for less favorable times.

The fact is, the diversity of Third World debtors makes the deterioration of the world economy a moot point. Mexico, Venezuela, and Nigeria are large oil exporters; Brazil is a large importer. A fall in oil prices damages the former and benefits the latter. By choosing particular years, commodities, and countries, it can always be suggested that the terms of trade of debtors have deteriorated. In the 1970s the rise in oil prices was used as an argument for more aid, more lending, and debt write-offs for less developed countries; in the 1980s the decline in oil prices is used to support the same argument.

Another frequently cited problem is the imposition of import restrictions by Western nations. Without doubt, these adversely affect many less developed nations. But they do not have a significant effect on the debtor countries. South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong are far more affected by such restrictions than debtors such as Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, and Nigeria. Yet they have grown rapidly in recent years. The truth is the West still offers huge markets for the Third World debtors. The debtors are affected far more by domestic policies (i.e., wasteful public spending and state monopolies) than by such external factors as import restrictions or changes in rates of growth in the West.

THREE ADDITIONAL arguments are often heard favoring large concessions to debtors and the transfer of additional funds to the Third World. First, it is said that attempts to make the debtors pay would result in a political and social upheaval that would create populist or Communist governments hostile to the West. Second, it is said that without major concessions, the plight of the debtors would endanger the Western banking and financial system. Third, it is claimed that without such concessions and transfers the Third World would buy less from the West, risking our own exports and jobs.

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None of these carries particular weight.

The emergence of populist, Communist, or other governments hostile to the West does not depend on the level of income or its rate of change. This is evident from experience in the Far East, the Middle East, and Africa. Moreover, the notion that concessions and transfers to Third World debtors are necessary to avert political changes damaging to the West opens the door to indefinite blackmail by Third World governments abroad and by commercial banks at home.

If the banks' solvency is threatened by the Third World debts, how can they declare large profits and pay substantial dividends? If their capital base is insufficient, should they not strengthen it by reducing their dividends and calling for more capital instead of lending more to Third World debtors? And if it is necessary to rescue banks with taxpayers' money, why not do it directly rather than send the money through Third World governments that are unlikely to use the funds to service their debts?

Even default by Third World debtors would not threaten the Western financial system. Western governments can ensure that bank losses will not endanger the depositors (as distinct from the stockholders or the management) of any bank—let alone the financial system. The Western governments could insist that the banks build up their capital base by reducing dividends and seeking new capital. The governments could also purchase loans at market value and/or take over some of the banks and sell them as going concerns after writing down the balance sheets.

The most influential proposals currently under discussion for solving the debt crisis involve increased lending by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to the most heavily indebted countries, combined with more lending by the commercial banks. Related proposals involve more foreign aid, and outright cancellation or scaling down of Third World debts. The Baker plan, for example, envisages increased lending by the World Bank, by the IMF, and by the banks, and more market-oriented policies by the debtors. The plan provides for additional resources on favorable terms to debtors who have not met their obligations—that is, who have defaulted. This means preferential treatment of the improvident, incompetent, and dishonest governments over those more scrupulous in meeting their contractual obligations.

Such a policy does little to promote conduct helpful to economic development. Instead, it only further politicizes life in the Third World and arouses the indignation of those Third World governments, like Colombia, that do meet their obligations. Preferential treatment of Third World debtor governments will also arouse the indignation of many debtors at home. Why should foreign debtor governments be treated leniently and even receive additional funds when domestic farmers and homeowners have to surrender their assets, which may be the source of their livelihood?

It is unlikely that the beneficiaries of such concessions and transfers would alter their policies in a more market-oriented direction without direct pressure. They may make cosmetic changes, especially in macroeconomic policies. But they will not dismantle the public sector, reduce major categories of public spending, or abandon major state controls. Why should they? Their policies, which have been supported for decades by official Western aid, accord with their own interests. They will modify them only if continued pursuit promises to result in economic breakdown threatening their political survival.

The dominant view of the debt problem reflects the activities and opinions of powerful interest groups. These include: major banks that wish to avoid or postpone overt losses on their portfolios, and to continue their profitable activities with the least risk; the World Bank and the IMF, which seek to expand their roles at a time when the grounds for their existence are increasingly questionable; Third World governments that understandably press for more resources to keep themselves in power, reinforce their grip over their subjects, and persist in their policies; and the aid lobbies, which welcome the most widely canvassed proposals because they envisage further transfer of resources from the West to Third World governments. Moreover, transfers to the major debtors pave the way for further transfers.

The likely outcome of the current discussions is the continued rescheduling and scaling down of existing debts and the injection of more funds into the Third World, especially Third World governments. This will encourage those who disregard their obligations. It will increase the moral hazard of lending to Third World governments. It will expand the role of the World Bank and the IMF and lead to a further waste of resources.

PETER BAUER

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The fair way to raise taxes.

LOOPHOLES AT LARGE

TAX REFORM is in danger, not from loophole lobbyists, but from members of Congress who want to pass regressive tax increases. In its search for money to cut the deficit, Congress is looking at excise taxes, which could undo most or all of the benefits for low- and middle-income people that were provided by the 1986 tax reform bill.

A Congressional Budget Office report in January laid out one excise tax scenario. The CBO estimated the revenues that would be generated by adding 12 cents a gallon to

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the gasoline tax and 50 cents to the tax on a six-pack of beer and a bottle of wine, doubling the cigarette tax, and extending the scheduled-to-expire telephone tax. That would raise $19 billion in fiscal 1988—just about the amount Congress needs to meet its budget targets. More than half that money would come from the increase in the gasoline tax, which raises almost $1 billion for every penny added to the tax. In fact, some would like to raise all the money needed to meet budget targets through higher gasoline taxes.

What's wrong with higher excise taxes? What's the big deal about paying an extra half buck for beer or wine, and an extra dollar and a half to fill your gas tank? The answer, in a nutshell, is that these taxes are an extremely regressive way to pay for government.

According to another CBO study, the just-described package of excise tax increases would cost families earning less than $10,000 a year more than two-and-a-half percent of their incomes. That's more than double the tax cut the poor gained from last year's tax reform act. Middle-income families would pay about one percent of their earnings in increased excise taxes—again, more than they will save in income taxes from the 1986 reform act. The richest families, those making more than $200,000 a year, would pay a mere one-tenth of a percent of their incomes in higher excise taxes, meaning that they'd keep most of their 1986-enacted tax cuts.

Notwithstanding the clear conflict with the tax reform act, there is considerable interest in excise taxes on Capitol Hill, even among a number of liberals. Apparently some members of Congress think that if a tax hike is sufficiently regressive, the president might not veto it. But it isn't easy to figure out what President Reagan will or will not tolerate.

Despite his rhetorical opposition to any tax increase, the president's own budget calls for some $20 billion in tax hikes over the next three fiscal years. Increased wage taxes (mainly from broadening the Social Security and Medicare tax base) would raise about $8 billion over three years. Excise tax hikes and "user fees" account for another $4 billion of the administration's deficit-reduction program. And by improving IRS enforcement and making disabled coal miners pay income taxes on their black lung benefits, the president proposes to add $8 billion to income tax revenues. In summary, Reagan is totally against raising taxes—except for payroll taxes, excise taxes, and income taxes.

WITHIN THESE limits, there are lots of things Congress can do that will continue, rather than reverse, the tax reform gains of last year. For starters, it should try to close some of the income tax loopholes left over after tax reform. If the president thinks it is reasonable to tax sick coal miners on their black lung benefits, why isn't it equally reasonable to tell McDonnell Douglas, Lockheed, and other defense contractors to give up what's left of special defense contracting loopholes? This reform would raise $6 billion over the next five years, and it's hard to conceive of a more deserving target.

Newspaper reports make it clear that the posh restaurant business is not suffering from the tax reform act's restriction on business meal deductions to 80 percent of what's spent. So why not lower the deduction to 50 percent—and raise $13 billion over the next five years? Why should American taxpayers be subsidizing the eating habits of the well-off?

Next year, unless Congress acts, the top estate tax rate is scheduled to drop from 55 percent to 50 percent. Freezing the top estate tax rate at 55 percent would avoid $2 billion in revenue losses over the next five years. And taxing capital gains when people die, instead of letting heirs inherit property and stocks with the taxes on built-up capital gains totally forgiven, could raise $22 billion over five years, and reduce the current disincentive for people to sell things while they're alive.

IF THE PRESIDENT thinks user fees are a good idea, why not consider Speaker of the House Jim Wright's suggestions to reinstate the stock-transfer tax that was on the books in the United States until 1965? Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom impose such a fee, without any apparent dire consequences. Shouldn't American investors pay something to the government for the privilege of trading in the largest stock market in the world?

Despite tax reform, corporations still are allowed to write off their machinery and equipment much faster than it wears out. These excessive deductions are expected to cost the Treasury a staggering $227 billion over the next five years—by far the largest break left for corporations in the reformed tax code. The system is particularly absurd for leased equipment: companies can pretend that rented machines wear out long before the lease term is completed. This expensive leasing anomaly, at least, cries out for correction.

Last year Congress tried to bar consumer interest deductions but left a loophole big enough to drive a truck through: "home equity loans." To stop people from borrowing against their homes to avoid the consumer interest limits, Congress could restrict mortgage interest deductions to loans taken out to purchase or improve a home. Or, at a minimum, the amount of home equity loans on which interest is deductible should be capped.

There was a lot of talk last year about getting rid of tax-shelter farming, but the restrictions on deductions for so-called farm "losses" could use some more teeth. If Congress is really concerned about bona fide family farms, farm "losses" shouldn't be allowed to shelter non-farm income above a limited amount. This rule ought to apply to corporate farmers too, and large farm enterprises should be prohibited from using the often abused "cash accounting" system designed to simplify bookkeeping for small farmers.

Last year's tax reform act did a lot to restore fairness to the income tax code, by cracking down on tax freeloaders and by making it more likely that people with similar incomes will pay about the same amount in taxes. The tax

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bill also made the tax system somewhat more progressive: the richest people now pay a slightly higher share of the personal income tax burden and corporations pay a considerably higher share of the overall income tax load. But the tax reform act did not address a fundamental weakness in the income tax: it doesn't raise enough money to pay for the cost of government. Sooner or later we're going to have to face up to that problem, and higher income tax rates should be part of the solution. Indeed, an important goal for many of us who favored tax reform last year was to set the stage for fair tax increases in the future.

Speaker Jim Wright has already proposed to freeze the top income tax rate at its 1987 level of 38.5 percent instead of letting it fall to 28 percent on January 1, 1988, as currently scheduled. Dan Rostenkowski, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, suggested higher income tax rates last September, even before the tax bill was passed. Maybe we'll have to wait for a new president before income tax rate hikes can be a real option—although Wright's tax freeze plan has a lot to recommend it right now. But in the meantime, we need to keep the spirit of tax reform alive in the deficit-reduction process. The biggest danger to tax reform is not that the loophole lobbyists are on the upsurge, but that regressive excise tax increases will undermine the fairness gains of last year.

ROBERT S. MCINTYRE

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Dog-and-pony show in Iowa.

CHARADE ON MAIN STREET

BY FRED BARNES

Des Moines, Iowa

Some of the stories may be apocryphal, but they give you an idea of what presidential candidates are up against in Iowa. There's the tale of the reporter who was covering the 1984 Iowa caucuses and wanted to get outside the political hothouse environment of Des Moines to find out what real Iowans thought. He drove 150 miles into the boondocks, approached a farmer, and asked what the fellow made of the caucuses and the presidential candidates who'd been campaigning so vigorously. "Well, on background . . ." Another story has it that in other states audiences stand up when presidential candidates come in a room. In Iowa candidates stand up when Iowans come in.

If you don't believe those, here's a story I know is true. Last April former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt decided to air an early wave of TV commercials in Iowa. Babbitt is a long-shot candidate for the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination, and he's banking heavily on a breakthrough in the caucuses next February 8. He dispatched a film crew to a farm near Des Moines operated by a middle-aged, ruddy-faced guy in overalls. With all their elaborate equipment, the producers of the TV spot were worried about the electrical hookup. No problem, the farmer said, detailing exactly what their equipment required and assuring them he could provide it. "He knew better than they did what they needed," says Chris Hamel, Babbitt's coordinator in Iowa. "He'd had commercials shot at his farm before."

The universe of the Iowa caucuses is small—maybe 200,000 to 225,000 people will show up in 1988—but the voters are sophisticated, demanding, and very spoiled. They take up an inordinate amount of every candidate's time, not just in the weeks before the caucuses but for years before. They're also highly ideological, especially the Democrats, who pull their candidates to the left. Their newest trick is to involve presidential candidates in local Iowa races, even at the county supervisor level.

Worst of all, Iowa has hijacked the entire presidential delegate selection process. Forget the New Hampshire primary. "It's a fact—Iowa is a hell of a lot more important than New Hampshire," says Ed Campbell, the former Iowa Democratic chairman. "New Hampshire is just a turn in the road before turning South." The Iowa caucuses are no longer first in the nation; Republican delegates will be picked in Michigan in January. But the Michigan process began so long ago, in 1985, that it's already been discounted by the political community.

The presidential field gets winnowed in Iowa. If you don't do well here, you're finished. The press plays a critical part in this. Eager to cover one-on-one match-ups for the presidential nominations, political reporters quit covering candidates who don't finish first, second, or a strong third in Iowa. In 1980 George Bush and Ronald Reagan emerged as the top Republican contenders in Iowa, and the press instantly ignored the rest, including Bob Dole and Howard Baker. In 1984 Walter Mondale and Gary Hart finished one, two in the Democratic caucuses in Iowa. The press dropped the others, except Jesse Jackson, who had novelty value. The only attention John Glenn got after Iowa was from reporters who wanted to know when he

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planned to drop out of the race. Alan Cranston and Reubin Askew didn't get that much.

There's no secret to doing well in Iowa. A candidate doesn't need national political experience or a compelling vision. As important as ideology is, what Iowa caucus attenders treasure most is personal contact with the candidates and their organizers. They crave being courted or, once they've chosen a candidate, having their hands held until caucus night. The sort of candidate who fares well is the one who has nothing better to do than devote 50 or 60 days to campaigning in Iowa in the year before the year of the caucuses. "This is not nuclear physics," says Steve Roberts, a former Iowa Republican chairman. "It's stamina. It's organizational ability. It's willingness to work the whole state and work it long and deep."

THE PIONEER was Jimmy Carter in 1976. He campaigned for months in Iowa, staying in people's homes, and finished first among the candidates (but behind uncommitted) in the Democratic caucuses. He was unstoppable after that. Bush emulated the Carter strategy in 1980, laboriously building an organization in all 99 counties and then upsetting Reagan in the caucuses. Reagan was the pioneer of what not to do in Iowa. He tried to get by with few mass rallies and little personal contact, and he skipped the televised debate among the candidates. It almost cost him the nomination, despite his high standing with Republicans across the country. In 1984 Glenn exhibited another way to lose—don't organize. He spent enough time in Iowa and joined the TV debate, but his organization was skeletal. He came in fifth in a field of eight and never recovered.

This time the candidates seem to have learned the lesson: come to Iowa early and often. Former Nevada Senator Paul Laxalt met with Republican leaders in Des Moines on May 11 and vowed that he would campaign for the GOP nomination in Iowa as if he were running for state office. Bush "has been in Iowa more than we've ever seen a vice president before," says Ronda Menke, the executive director of the Iowa GOP. "We're nine months from the caucuses and you'd think the election is next month," says Governor Terry Branstad. By early May the Democratic candidates had spent nearly 200 days in Iowa in 1986 and 1987. By February they'll probably have doubled the 300 days that eight Democrats campaigned in Iowa in 1982, 1983, and 1984. The leader is Representative Richard Gephardt of Missouri with 58 days. "He's almost Carteresque in spending time with people one-on-one," says Ed Campbell. "It takes a certain type of person to do that." Babbitt has logged 48 days, and his TV ads, which went on the air in May, are the earliest on record. Of course, with all this time in Iowa, something has to give. Other states get short shrift from presidential candidates. And if the candidates have jobs, they neglect them. Iowa politicos brag about how Iowa voters demand personal contact with candidates, but they ignore the downside of this self-centeredness. There's never a whisper that the qualities that appeal in Iowa—organization and a talent for mingling—don't necessarily make for a good general election candidate. Perish the thought.

Effective organizing in Iowa has to reach down to the 2,495 precincts, which is where the caucuses will be held in February. Organizing even a fraction of them can be mind-boggling. The more precincts the candidate actually visits, the better. But there are other approaches. Babbitt has divided up caucus attendees in several unique ways. He has tried with some success to organize "children's advocates," people who run day-care centers or favor more day care. "It's an untraditional group," says Hamel, "but it's out there." In Carroll County, one children's advocate recruited eight day-care operators for the Babbitt campaign. Babbitt has also aggressively gone after environmentalists.

Babbitt was the first candidate to buy the list of registered Democrats from the Iowa Democratic Party, which charges $10,000. (The party also sells a *1987-88 Democratic Caucus Almanac* for $35.) Five others have now purchased the list. By early spring Babbitt had not only mailed literature to the home of every caucus attendee in 1984, but his operatives had called each one. Remember, this is nearly a year before the 1988 caucuses. Gephardt has exploited the proximity of Missouri. For the party's Jefferson-Jackson dinner last November, he imported dozens of Missouri supporters and placed them one to a table to talk up his presidential prospects. This May Gephardt made sure he got a warm reception at a Democratic picnic in Des Moines. He stacked the crowd with scores of placard-waving backers bused in from Missouri.

Among Republicans, Representative Jack Kemp of New York experienced a major crisis in his Iowa campaign a year before the caucuses. He removed the two Iowans in charge, complaining about shortcomings in organization. This didn't sit well with some in Iowa. Years ago one of the fired aides, John Maxwell, had introduced Governor Branstad to his wife. "Maxwell is a tremendous political operative," Branstad said. Now Kemp has lowered his sights. He's concentrating on western Iowa, the more conservative section of the state. And he's singled out two special constituencies, evangelicals and college kids. Whenever he comes to Iowa, Kemp always appears at an evangelical event and a college event.

THE MOST ABSURD part of campaigning in Iowa is the courtship of party leaders. One is Elaine Baxter, the secretary of state. Presidential candidates "call me," she says. "They visit me. They send members of their family. I've had breakfast with Kitty Dukakis. I've had lunch with Hattie Babbitt. Lee Hart was in to see me. I've met with key staff people for Dukakis, Gephardt, Biden. I get phone calls from Gephardt and Biden. We talk about how they're doing." In Cedar Rapids a local union head named Connie Clark draws enormous attention. She reputedly keeps a chart on her wall for rating each candidate's visit. On one visit Gephardt bought her a statue of a dog. The wife of Senator Joe Biden of Delaware got her to promise she'd stay neutral until June 9, when Biden formally announces his candidacy. Hamel, the Babbitt organizer, says he gets a daily reading on how Clark is leaning. He figures she leans toward Gephardt, Babbitt, and Biden, in that order. The

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only Democrat who worries publicly about this spectacle is Chuck Gifford, the head of the United Auto Workers in Iowa. "It borders on embarrassment when some Iowan talks about how a candidate sent of box of candy or talked to their dog," he says. "We hadn't ought to demean the process."

Grass-roots organizers as well as leaders are wooed. When Gary Hart quit the campaign in early May, he left behind a 14-person staff in Iowa, headed by Teresa Vilmain. The Hart team was a hot property, particularly to candidates like Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis and Illinois Senator Paul Simon who don't have a network of Iowa operatives. But rather than the candidates interviewing job-seekers from the Hart campaign, the Harties interviewed the candidates. "We basically went to see candidates in action," says Vilmain. They got to Simon at a breakfast in Adel, Dukakis at a gathering in Ottumwa. The best guess is that most will join the Dukakis campaign.

The newest wrinkle in keeping presidential candidates fixated on Iowa is to treat them like state pols. Babbitt testified before the Iowa legislature last summer on ground water quality, one of his favorite subjects, and Dukakis has advised legislators on welfare reform. The Democratic candidate for governor in 1986, Lowell Junkins, adopted some of Dukakis's notions. "I can't forget the unsolicited call I got from some guy in Dukakis's office during the campaign asking if I wanted an explanation of Junkins's program," wrote David Yepsen, the chief political writer of the *Des Moines Register*.

Babbitt has outdistanced Dukakis and everyone else in local involvement. His political action committee sent two staffers to Iowa last year. One became scheduler for a congressional candidate, the other an aide at Democratic headquarters. Babbitt pumped $60,000 from his PAC into Iowa races, $1,400 of which went to House Speaker Don Avenson. "This year, before I go with somebody, I want them all to raise $50,000 apiece for my House candidates," Avenson had said. "Either they're a player in our process or I'm not interested." Avenson is still neutral. House Majority Leader Bob Arnould was more pointed yet. He said contributions were a "litmus test" of presidential candidates. Biden's PAC spent nearly $40,000 on Iowa races last year, $30,807 to aid Junkins, who later endorsed Biden. Gephardt sent $9,000 to Junkins. Gary Hart sent nothing, which prompted grousing. Babbitt supported two candidates for county supervisor. Both lost, but both endorsed Babbitt.

REPUBLICANS, led by Bush with $42,170, gave generously to Iowa races and campaigned extensively in person. Dawn Roberts, the GOP candidate for secretary of state, received $1,000 each from Bush, Dole, and Donald Rumsfeld, who was the first presidential candidate to open an Iowa office and the first to close (when he quit the race). Bush spent a day campaigning for her, Rumsfeld spoke at a fund-raising event, and Dole and his wife, Elizabeth, who is transportation secretary, appeared for her. When Roberts lost 51 percent to 49 percent, she got a call of consolation from Bush.

For Democrats, an enduring problem is that the caucuses are dominated by left-wing liberals and interest groups (labor, peace groups, teachers, etc.). Al From, the director of the moderate Democratic Leadership Council, says this skews the debate among the candidates, making them stress arms control, for example, but not defending the country. Republicans don't have the same problem with conservative domination, since there's still a large moderate faction. Besides, the irony is the state that will be instrumental in choosing Reagan's successor is the state where he's least popular.

In 1984 John Glenn was thunderstruck at the results of a poll of prospective caucus attendees. About 50 percent called themselves liberals, compared to 20 percent of Democrats nationally. The poll asked the Iowans to choose between a big-spending liberal and a moderate who would promote the national interest, not pursue narrow ideology. The liberal won. A survey this year got similar results. Some 85 percent of Democratic caucus attendees want a larger government role in social and economic affairs. By 65 percent to 27 percent they favor an international trading system where countries are required to import and export the same amount. Jimmy Carter is a saint in Iowa. In the poll, 90 percent regarded him favorably; 88 percent judged Reagan unfavorably.

THE CAUCUSES have been around for decades in Iowa, but their emergence as battlegrounds in the presidential campaign is new. The motive was to get press attention. In 1972 there were inquiries from reporters, so Democratic officials used sample precincts as the basis for projecting how many delegates each candidate would win. In 1976 Republicans got in the act, taking a straw vote at some precincts. In 1980 both parties took presidential tallies at all precincts. Now that's the rule.

But the results aren't an accurate measure of voter sentiment. They don't reflect the first choice of all voters. Each candidate must have at least 15 percent at a caucus to be "viable." If not, the candidate's backers must shift to another candidate, which is common, or vote uncommitted. Thus, unlike in a primary, the candidate who finishes first may not have more first-choice support than an opponent. Nor are the results reliable. In 1972 Edmund Muskie was projected as handily beating George McGovern, but McGovern wound up getting as many delegates as Muskie. Had that been known at the time of the caucuses, the campaign might have gone differently. Muskie's fall might have come sooner, and Hubert Humphrey might have gotten in the race earlier as McGovern's chief challenger. In 1980 the GOP computer broke down and the vote count was never completed. Hugh Winebrenner, a professor at Drake University in Des Moines and author of *The Iowa Precinct Caucuses: The Making of a Media Event*, says it's possible that Reagan, not Bush, won. "Iowa misleads the nation," says Winebrenner. "The Iowa results are of very dubious value." This is a theme that Iowa politicians won't take up. And the 1988 presidential candidates won't either. Iowa has them just where it wants them, on the run and eager to please. □

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As the yen goes up, Japan goes down.

THE BALLAD OF RON AND YASU

BY MURRAY SAYLE

Tokyo

There is more than one way to look at last month's meetings in Washington between President Reagan and his good friend the Japanese prime minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone. The world's biggest creditor and the world's leading debtor perhaps talked debt service, and, who knows, even repayment. The Hertz and Avis of the industrial powers obviously have a lot to mull over, including the Japanese trade surplus, now running at between $60 billion and $70 billion a year, the punitive tariffs just slapped on a range of Japanese products, and the legislation currently before Congress that threatens more American retaliation against those deemed guilty of unfair trade practices, headed by Japan.

Then there's the human side. We don't hear so much about it these days, but Reagan and Nakasone are said to be personally close, a relationship going back to 1983, when they conferred in Washington for the first time, alone, to discuss defense and a Japanese trade surplus then standing at a measly $18 billion. Nakasone later reported, "He said, 'Call me Ron,' and I said, 'Call me Yasu.' So next time we meet it will be 'Hi Ron' and 'Hi Yasu.' " And, so far as we know, it's been Ron and Yasu and howsaboy on their five subsequent encounters, each ending amicably with Japanese promises that the ever-widening trade gap would soon shrink to a scratch, if that.

Some old-timers will recall that Japan and the United States don't really go all that far back, not having, for instance, fought shoulder to shoulder during World War II, Korea, or Vietnam. But Yasu and Ron hit it off. Japan should be "an unsinkable aircraft carrier equipped with a tremendous bulwark of defense against the [Soviet] Backfire bomber," Yasu said on that first Washington visit, and should assert "complete and full control of the four straits that go through the Japanese islands so that there should be no passage of Soviet submarines and other naval atrocities." This was the first time a postwar Japanese prime minister had named the Soviets as Japan's prospective enemy, much less outlined the war plan against them. When Yasu also promised quick action to reduce or eliminate Japan's trade surplus, he was able to report back in Tokyo that he had established "a personal relationship of trust" in Washington. "I hear that Americans like red-blooded men," he told reporters. The Pacific partners had finally found their human link, the two strong men who could clear the thicket of misunderstandings that constantly seem to obstruct the traditional friendship.

It was, in fact, for just this reason that Yasu got his job. His predecessor, Zenko Suzuki, a one-time oyster expert, conspicuously failed to wow Washington. He once mangled his lines, saying that Japan was a "proud mouse" when he meant to say "wise hedgehog." The dissatisfied bosses of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party got together and decided the country needed a Communicator. Yasu, fluent in English and knowledgeable about America (he once translated *Politics USA: A Practical Guide to the Winning of Public Office* by James Cannon), was just the man. Tall for a Japanese and solidly built, Yasu plays a mean round of golf, handicap 12. His only drawback is a reputation among Japanese for inconsistency and a nickname to go with it: "the weather vane."

In his memorable first visit Yasu certainly took American pressure off the trade and defense issues, for a while. That was nearly five years ago. Now, coincidentally, the two old friends seem to have fallen on hard times. Yasu's term runs out in October and will not be renewed. The Japanese press carries articles with headlines like "NAKASONE: THE POLITICS OF DECEIT." Ron, of course, inspires similar headlines. Both communicators are suffering severe and perhaps permanent *imaaji daun*, as Japanese politicians say, or in Japanese-English "image down."

From image up to image down, the story of Ron and Yasu can be told with a number: how many yen for a dollar. The exchange rates do not simply reflect the state of trade and other issues between the two countries, but define them. Who sets the rate, how, and why are interesting questions, but the seesawing rate itself is the arbiter of economic destiny—the maker, and often the breaker, of international friendships.

The yen's link to the dollar ended in 1971. Back then the Japanese were still exporting everything that wasn't bolted down and importing only what would not inconvenience any important Japanese interest—that is, practically nothing but bare essentials. Foreigners had few ways of earning yen. Inexorably, trade surpluses started to appear, Americans and others had to sell more dollars to buy yen, and the yen started to climb in value.

But as the yen goes up, worldwide market shares—Japan's manifest destiny—start to shrink. In order to export, your economy has to import. A modernized, highly efficient export system or an inadequate, restricted, or inefficient import base means that your country is poor ("a country is wealthy if the necessities, conveniences, and luxuries of life are easily come by," says Adam Smith, which explains why debtor USA is rich and creditor Japan is not) and that eventually your export machine, unable to climb the

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ever higher barrier of unfavorable exchange rates, seizes up. This happened in turn to the first two defeated industrial and financial top dogs, Britain and the United States. It is about to happen to the third, Japan. Whatever anyone says, from now on Japan's world market shares will contract, and very likely the Japanese economy with them.

Few countries have a monopoly on anything, and certainly no one in the industrial world has one on ingenuity, diligence, the work ethic, or access to books on Japanese management principles. When someone offers you an imported product, your decision tends to come down to price, not what it cost him to make in his currency, but what it costs you to buy in yours. This influence of the exchange rate is self-perpetuating. If you buy and urge your friends to, he can extend his product run, manufacture more cheaply, and, if the rate holds steady, lower his price some more. His industry will then attract more capital, more bright school leavers, more political pull, and prosper.

IN 1930, to take a fateful year, one dollar exchanged for one yen. Even then, Americans had a romantic weakness for imports, many brought in by fast motorboat across the Great Lakes. The tightfisted Japanese, on the other hand, busy building their autarkic empire, saw imports as a personal challenge to do better, and to do it cheaper (the first bottle of Japanese Scotch, reputedly labeled QUEEN GEORGE V WHISKEY MADE ONLY FROM GENUINE SCOTTISH GRAPES, rolled off the lines in Osaka in 1928).

However, the oncoming Great Depression convinced the U.S. Congress that imports were taking American jobs, so in 1930 Senator Reed Smoot and Representative Willis C. Hawley introduced their famous tariff, which effectively prevented foreigners earning dollars to buy American exports, thus spreading mass unemployment to the American heartland and depression to the rest of the world. Instead, foreigners struggled to keep up their loan repayments in gold, which about then began its temporary stopover under Fort Knox.

Meanwhile, Japan became involved first in the Manchurian Police Action and then the China Incident, or, as unsubtle Westerners would say, in war. War is practically all exports, but not the kind that bring in foreign exchange. As (excuse the expression) Pearl Harbor came into view, the yen was four to the dollar, a rate that made Japanese non-lethal exports dangerously desirable, inducing further restrictions to keep them out of the West and its colonies, Japanese resentment, and in no time at all, a dent in traditional Japanese-American friendship.

By 1945 Japanese expectations and productivity had been sharply reduced by the U.S. Air Force. The American occupation found itself governing a starving country, shorn of its empire and thus of almost all its raw materials, dependent on American food handouts for daily survival. The authors of the Potsdam Declaration, calling on Japan to surrender, declared that their intention was not to exterminate the Japanese, but to disarm them and permit them to make their way in the world through peaceful work. In Japan's circumstances, this could be by manufacturing exports.

Because virtually all Japanese industry had been working on the war effort since 1938, it made sense to the occupiers to leave Japan's new start in non-military exporting in the hands of the bureaucrats who had organized the armaments industries. "The policy," as a memorandum dated August 29, 1945, put it, "is to use the existing form of the government in Japan." Overnight the wartime Munitions Ministry became MITI, the dreaded Ministry of International Trade and Industry, with the same bureaucrats sitting at the same desks and giving much the same "guidance" over the same telephones (they now have new, touch-tone models) to the same industrialists.

Japanese-American relations would be easier to follow if MITI had been called the Ministry of Exports, although it does have an interest in certain imports, such as those that might damage Japanese export industries. During the war years the Munitions Ministry devised a system of assured sales, concessionary credit, production allocation, cartels to exploit new technology, subcontractors supplying components (and dispersing the targets), and prompt shipment to the docks, the whole thing coordinated by mixed committees of bureaucrats and businessmen. That is to say, the only reasonable way to run a war effort. The United States, Britain, and Germany all had something similar, the difference being that Japan (and to some extent West Germany) still have theirs.

Japan was given no Ministry of Imports, and still has none. It occurred to no one, Japanese or American, that one would ever be needed. The system of rice distribution that kept the Japanese eating during the war was retained and is in place today. Every suburb and village has its dilapidated storefront selling rice at six times the world price, and, to keep up with the times, dog, cat, and poultry food at similar rates. The aim of the occupation was to keep imports out, to give Japanese industry a chance against deadly, superefficient American competition. The sclerotic system that now distributes foreign products with as low a volume and high a markup as the traffic will bear actually originated in the occupation years.

THE OCCUPATION POLICY of import substitution and export stimulation, aimed at getting the Japanese self-supporting as soon as possible, needed to be integrated into the world economy. The job was entrusted to the Detroit banker Joseph M. Dodge, financial adviser to Gen. Douglas MacArthur. In 1949 Dodge decreed that henceforth the Japanese were to balance their budget (no overtime on the printing press, no pumping up the economy with deficit financing to score votes). The exchange rate was set at 360 to the dollar, so that a Japanese engineer with extensive wartime production experience—someone like Seichiro Honda, the motorcycle wizard—could be hired for the equivalent of $20 a week. Japanese exports were—surprise, surprise—not long in taking off, especially as the Korean War came providentially along to provide a hot market only 80 miles offshore.

A conservative people, the Japanese followed Dodge's rules for the next 20 years, and gave him the Order of the

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Rising Sun in gratitude. He earned it, when we consider the beauty of the system to which he put the finishing touches. The balanced budget depoliticizes budget-making, and the autonomous bureaucracy insulates the economy from vote-hungry politicians. The fixed and favorable exchange rate guarantees that exports are, from the overseas buyer's viewpoint, irresistible bargains. Industrialists, as long as they keep their eyes on the target, namely, maximizing world market shares, get all the help they can use from an efficient and impartial bureaucracy. Their cooperation, though, is more or less voluntary (and gets more voluntary the more they sell abroad), so the cost of enforcement is low, lawsuits minimal, and price wars within the industry unknown. As long as the bureaucracy shows they can protect their flock, the whole export machine can be run over the telephone or at jolly geisha parties. There is, of course, no import machine to run.

From the outside, the whole thing can look like a giant conspiracy. In fact it's even more intractable: it's a system, with everyone righteously doing what he's been told to do, and keeping off other people's turf.

The job of a Japanese politician is to keep this system operating, not to change it. Yasu's main contribution is to manufacture verbal grease, soothing phrases that will prevent open war between conflicting interests and allow everyone to pretend that action has been taken when none is intended: "all-out efforts will be made," "plans are under active preparation," "sincere understanding has been reached," and so on. Ron must know them by heart.

Nor does the operation of a Japanese-style system, despite what we read, call for supersalesmen, organizational geniuses, or samurai ancestry. The South Koreans, for instance, are in the inconspicuous early stages of it right now. The Korean won is tied to the dollar, and, expressed in yen, Korean wages are one-fifth those of Japan. Later this year you will be able to try your new Ford Festiva, made in Korea from Japanese parts, against GM's new Pontiac LeMans, Korean-made to a German design, and see who's top Confucian manufacturer now.

Exchange rates alone are quite capable of generating trade surpluses for diligent Asian manufacturers, as witness the current case of Hong Kong. The Hong Kong dollar is pegged at 7.8 to the U.S. dollar, and Hong Kong is currently running a trade surplus with the United States of around $8 billion a year. Being a free port, anyone can import or export anything legal, and Hong Kong has regretfully had to be exempted from the list of "unfair traders" targeted by the proposed American trade legislation. But Hong Kong, apart from its thin topdressing of British officials, obviously has much in common with the economies of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea.

IS THERE a catch in the new Oriental mode of production? Are Asians destined to rule the industrial world? Americans, with their passion for worldly goods, assume that consumers in these countries must one day rise and tear down the barriers that are keeping out Sears, Roebuck and the A&P. This certainly does not apply to Japan. The latest poll shows that 69 percent of the Japanese public believes that imports should not be expanded if they compete with Japanese products (56.2 percent) or should be restricted if they do or avoided altogether (13.2 percent)—i.e., leave things exactly the way they are. This explains Yasu's recent "import action program," so much misunderstood in the United States, of publicly buying French neckties and a Swiss fondue set. Yasu was not trying to be funny or butter up the Swiss. He simply went democratically with the 56.2 percent who don't want to see competition with Japanese products.

It is not consumer backlash that sets limits to the exchange rate dodge, but elementary economics. Purchases of Hong Kong products are not limited by your ability to speak Cantonese or sell to thrifty Hong Kongers. You just have to export something to the United States—which is, as we know, duck soup—and then exchange your Washingtons for the Hong Kong kind at the excellent rate of 7.8 to one. This is only possible, however, if your honorable economy is small. Otherwise you will soon put your host out of business. If the Japanese yen were still 360 to the dollar, manufacturing would long since have ceased in the United States and not a stack would smoke from sea to shining sea.

THE JAPANESE scheme of forced industrial growth is brilliantly effective in the early stages, when imports of machinery and technology and loan service payments keep your currency cheap. By the time you are accounting for ten percent of the world's GNP, however, you are practicing not so much unfair as positively hazardous trading. Japan's day of retribution should have dawned in the early 1970s, when the trade surpluses started to appear and inflation broke out ("crazy prices," the baffled Japanese called it) after lying doggo for more than 20 years. But the evil day was postponed for 15 more years by OPEC and then Ronald Reagan.

The tenfold increase in oil prices, according to the conventional wisdom of the time, should have hobbled Japan, the world's biggest energy importer. In fact it kept the yen cheap and forced economies on Japanese manufacturers, including the postponement of the long-overdue reduction in working hours. The export machine was further modernized and exports zoomed. Late in the 1970s the trade surpluses started to surface again, and the yen went up. Robert Strauss, Jimmy Carter's trade negotiator, came to Tokyo to protest a surplus of $6 billion, but left telling the media that all was well. The Japanese had promised to reduce or eliminate the surplus by 1980, or 1981 at the latest.

Then Ron arrived in Washington under a banner with a strange device, supply-side economics. The theory, to simplify brutally, is that politically popular tax cuts and budget deficits will not cause too much loose money to chase too few goods (inflation), because suppliers will rush in to fill the gap. Unlike many economic theories, this one is sound. The trouble is that Ron's supply side runs from Hokkaido down to Kyushu, with small branches in Taiwan and Seoul. The yen, which was 176 to the dollar in 1978, just before the second oil crisis, was

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down to 278 to the dollar by 1982, as product and money poured over the Pacific.

For, with their new economies, the Japanese manufacturers were making immense bundles of dollars. They did not, however, convert them to yen to invest at home, where there is nothing much left to invest in apart from the quality of Japanese life, a low-growth area. Instead, they bought U.S. bonds, thus in effect both financing Ron's ambitious rearmament program and lending Americans the yen to buy cheap Japanese products and keep inflation at bay. Ron, in short, owed his re-election in 1984, at least on the economic side, to Yasu and his countrymen. And Yasu owed *his* re-election, despite adverse reactions at home to his "unsinkable aircraft carrier" talk, to a healthy economy based, like all Japanese economic vitality, on exports, mostly to the United States, with a promising second front in Europe.

"Most friendships, sir," Dr. Johnson once said to Boswell, "are mere leagues in vice, or conspiracies in folly." That's not Ron and Yasu. Theirs is, or rather was, based on the soundest of foundations, mutual advantage. So what's gone wrong? Is the tension between their countries, or is it, as Jay Gatsby said, just personal?

THE PLAZA HOTEL in New York, with its memories of bathtub gin and suicidal stockbrokers, was an evocative spot for Western finance ministers to rendezvous in September 1985. The Plaza meeting started the current slide of the dollar, or ascent of the mark and yen, which comes to the same thing. On that fateful day a dollar bought 242 yen. As Yasu and Ron communicated last month, it was 139 yen. At that rate nothing can long be profitably exported from Japan to the United States, except possibly watches, and even watches stop making a profit at around 130 yen to the dollar.

The results in the United States have not, so far, been spectacular. Japanese products are only a little more expensive, showing how enormously profitable they were before. But back in Japan, the economy is in recession; industrial investment will not grow even one percent this year; unemployment, a serious matter where work is the purpose of life, is edging toward three percent. To stay in business, or at least in the businesses they are in now, the big manufacturers are searching for ever more ingenious ways of saving money. Nissan employees, for instance, have started sharpening pencils at both ends and recycling interoffice memos as toilet paper, thus doing their bit to reduce imports of graphite and paper pulp, and push the yen up some more.

The fact that the yen's rise was so long delayed, that it was triggered by a meeting in sinful New York, that it has been, by coincidence, accompanied by charges of unfair trading and threats of sanctions from Ron and Mrs. Thatcher, have convinced the Japanese that the Americans and their relations are somehow forcing up the yen to put defenseless, innocent Japan out of business. It occurs to no one that the high yen was made in Japan.

Japan exports twice what it imports, which is guaranteed to put anyone's currency through the ceiling, sooner or later. The lowered oil prices have helped, as has the slackening American demand for commercial credit. But Ron still has to finance his budget deficit, and this can only be done if the Japanese buy U.S. bonds. Instead, they have been dumping dollars to buy yen, fearing that the dollar would go down further, and thus making sure that just that happened. The surplus yen have come home, to double Tokyo land prices in a year and start a pointless boom on the Tokyo stock exchange, thus attracting bankers with more money to Japan, pushing up the yen some more. Japanese manufacturing, in short, is drowning in a useless flood of money, while the United States is simultaneously threatening Japan with sanctions and praying that the Japanese will keep covering the budget deficit.

The stage is now set for a deteriorating people-to-people friendship. If the Japanese stop buying American bonds and the Koreans and Taiwanese are slow in expanding their exports, prices and interest rates will go up in the United States, and the economy will slow down. Officially identified as liars, cheats, and unfair traders, the Japanese are bound to get the blame. On this side of the Pacific, the politest explanation for Japan's growing recession has been offered by Takeshi Watanabe, the Scrooge-like president of the Japan Credit Rating Association: "Japan is being criticized by foreigners [guess which?] who have become work-shy, have abandoned production in favor of consumption, and are now losing out to Japanese competition. In the face of such defeat these foreigners do not rally round the workplace as a Japanese would in the same circumstances, but instead they are trying to get us to imitate their bad habits."

OTHER JAPANESE commentators offer uglier stuff. One currently best-selling author, Masami Uno, says that "international Jewish capital" is engineering a "great global depression," and that "the high yen is the first step in the Jewish takeover of Japan." Others see "a new ABCD encirclement," that is, a revival of the mythical American-British-Chinese-Dutch plot that supposedly compelled Japan to attack that place in Hawaii. There are more straws in the wind. Last week a reporter of the mildly liberal *Asahi* newspaper was murdered in his office, reportedly by the same right-wing fanatical group that bombed the U.S. consulate in Kobe in 1981. And the executives of big finance houses such as Nomura Securities have started employing bodyguards, for the first time since the violent 1930s.

Sleeping demons are starting to stir here, ominous echoes from Japan's blackest days, and some of America's too. What we need now are two strong men who can stand up against the bigots among their own supporters, get a grasp of the problems, and set the traditional friendship off to a new start. Great communicators, in fact. Ron and Yasu are due to have their next and perhaps final meeting at the economic summit in watery Venice in early June. Here's their chance to make that last, big, historic splash. □

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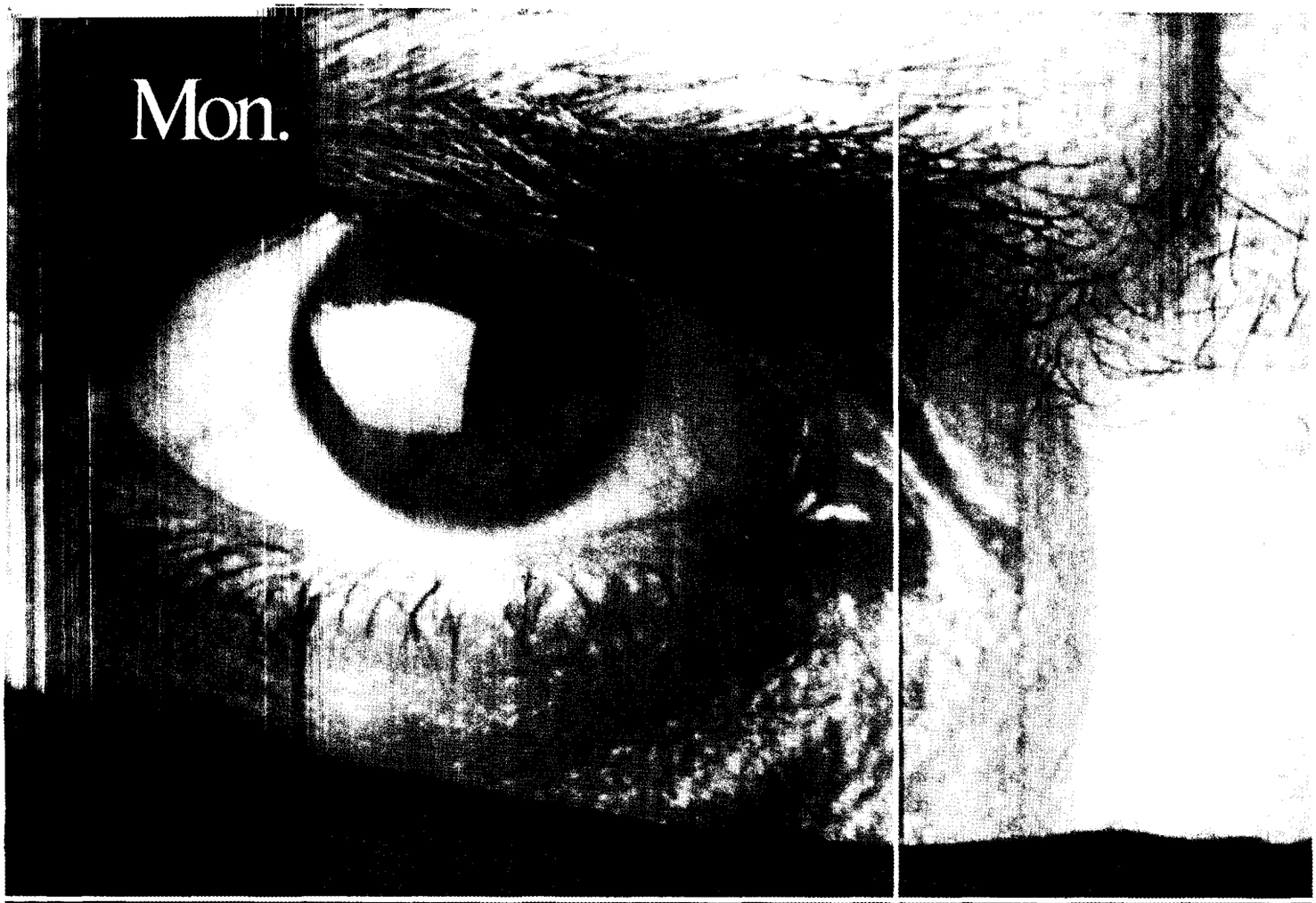

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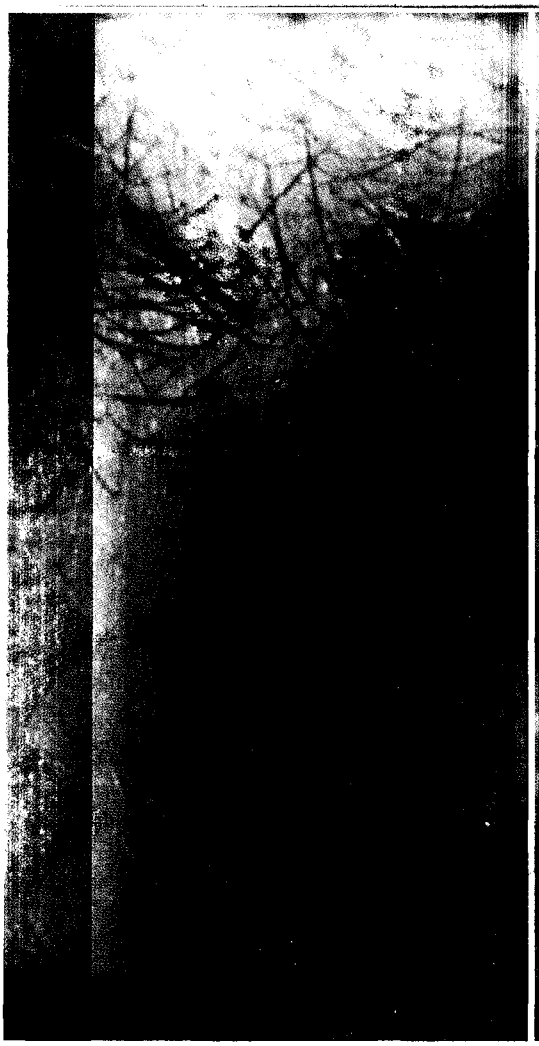

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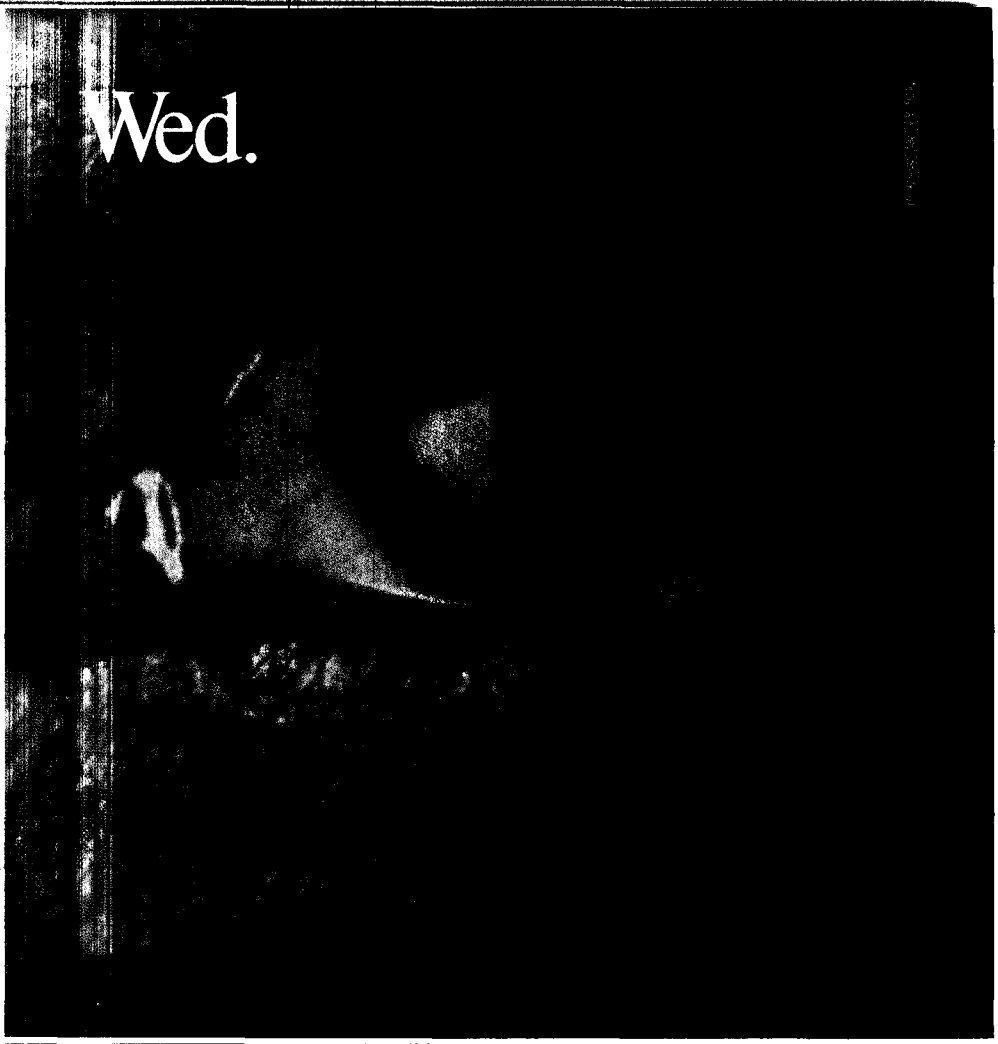

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Sexual Advances

Excelsior! Fellatio has reached the screen. It's been common in porno films ever since there were such; it's been frequently suggested off-screen for at least 20 years in American and foreign non-porn; it's been candidly mentioned in films. Now it can be seen in non-porn.

I cite it at the start because it's the most memorable aspect of *Devil in the Flesh*. This is a sorry statement—not because notoriety will obscure high quality but because it won't: the film marks a further decline in a director-writer of great promise and some achievement. Marco Bellocchio made his feature debut in 1965 with *Fists in the Pocket*, an overheated but excellently acted family drama; followed it with *China Is Near*, a strong political picture; and followed that one with *In the Name of the Father*, a perceptive, bitter story of adolescent boys. At that point he seemed to me "the best Italian director of his (mid-30s) generation." Since then, disintegration: the kind that comes from dwindling of material and inflation of style. *Victory March*, *Leap into the Void*, and *The Eyes, The Mouth* were caricatures of serious films, full of angst-for-sale, salon photography, elliptical action, and posing by actors and director alike—high art for the gullible. These films were followed by his version of Pirandello's *Henry IV*, which was just a smear on the play.

Devil in the Flesh
(Orion Classics)

The Pornographers
(East-West Classics)

Now Bellocchio is back to his own windy Phase Two with a film tenuously derived from Raymond Radiguet's novel of the same title. Like the book, this *Devil in the Flesh* has as its center an affair between a youth and an older woman—here an 18-year-old schoolboy and a woman in her mid-20s who is engaged—but the rest has been invented by Bellocchio and his two script collaborators. The additions include Red Brigade terrorism and father-son tension: the son's lover is a patient of the father's, a psychoanalyst who himself fantasizes about the woman.

Back and forth the film scans this landscape like a swiveling TV camera in a bank, but nothing is realized in the various themes, individually or in conjunction. Nothing of Radiguet's rite-of-passage for the youth is retained: this schoolboy is an experienced amorist. Nothing is articulated by the woman, Maruschka Detmers, about any difference between the youth, Federico Pitzalis, and her fiancé, who is one of a number of terrorists now on trial. Nothing is made of the neurosis from which Detmers is said to suffer; although we see some tantrums, they add up to little more than irrelevant volatility. No relationship is made between the radical politics around the picture and the sex at its center. At the end Detmers skips her wedding (her fiancé has been released) in order to sit at the back of the classroom when her young lover appears for his finals before his school's examining board. But does this mean that she is leaving her fiancé for this boy? Or, with her moodiness, will she be back to marry her betrothed the next day? And in any case, what of it?

All that the picture delivers finally is the implication that it is stupid to ask these questions, that only clods would fail to grasp the profundities of this work.

Possibly unintentionally, the film does raise one clear issue: pornography. Freedom of utterance is having difficulty enough in these Meese-laden days, and I'm not about to join any movement to hobble that freedom; but filmmakers take advantage of my nobility. They linger on frank lovemaking to prove their fearless honesty or to titillate—or both—and, doing so, they seem to smile smugly at libertarians. Horizontal activities in films of the last decade or so are past number. The ultimate thus far was in *Betty Blue*, where, I think, the couple in the opening shot was really copulating. Still, this wasn't completely explicit—that is, I could be wrong. Now, in *Devil in the Flesh*, we see Detmers, full screen, her head in the youth's lap, unzip his fly, take out his organ, and proceed. For me, the only question about explicit sex is necessity. The bath that the woman gives the man in Teshigahara's *Woman in the Dunes* is one of the most erotic scenes I know and is essential to the film. But (to disregard its other protracted nuzzlings) if the fellatio had been omitted from *Devil in the Flesh*, what would have been lost? Only Bellocchio's chance to dare us to object, just as he dares us to question the thematic clarity of the picture.

Detmers and Pitzalis are good. She is much more colorful than she was in Godard's *First Name: Carmen*. (Perhaps this is because she has been dubbed in Italian, and the other voice sounds livelier.) But does the increase in screen permissiveness alter the requirements for screen acting? Will applicants be required to demonstrate various sexual proficiencies? Are clauses about fellatio and cunnilingus to become standard in film contracts? If so, I hope that the performers will at least have the right to agree that the sex is essential. That agreement could be the first line of defense—moral defense, anyway—against the Meese types.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

My Life as a Dog. Humor, insight, sadness keep this account of a 12-year-old Swedish boy far from the maudlin and make it charming. (Reviewed 5/25/87)

Prick Up Your Ears. Memorable writing, acting, directing render the life of the English dramatist Joe Orton as macabre a comedy as his plays. (4/20/87)

Rosa Luxemburg. Margarethe von Trotta's direction and Barbara Sukowa's performance, both excellent, compensate in great measure for the shortcomings of the script. (5/18/87)

Tampopo. Food and sex are the two chief appetites in this wild Japanese comedy about a young widow who runs a noodle shop and the truck driver who helps her. (6/1/87)

SK

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Bellocchio's first three films were, by statement or atmospherics, Marxist. Now Marxism seems to be passé for him, if not a topic of derision. The fiancé, on trial for a political crime, declares that he has left Marxism for the Church. When Pitzalis takes his exams, he scoffs at the professor who assumes that he is a Marxist. While Detmers performs the oral sex act, Pitzalis recounts Lenin's journey to the Finland Station. Some estranged Marxists—Bellocchio seems to be one—apparently become frantically sexual, especially as they grow middle-aged. Godard, no longer a voluble Maoist, uses women's naked bodies as decor. Bellocchio uses his actors sexually like a belatedly born capitalist exploiter.

Shohei Imamura's *The Pornographers*, despite its subject, has almost no sex activity in it. The Japanese title translates as *An Introduction to Anthropology*, and that Zolaesque note—art with scientific intent—suits the film. Imamura is a director to be reckoned with, but the United States has not been reckoning with him. He has made 16 features, including the powerful *Vengeance Is Mine*, but few of them have been shown here, and those few have had dim receptions. *The Pornographers*, now getting its American theatrical premiere in a sparkling new print at the New York Film Forum, was made 21 years ago.

Imamura focuses not on pornography but on the life of a man who makes pornographic films, little 8mm loops for private sale, some of them done to customers' specifications. Ogata, the protagonist, lives with a widow and her two teen-age children in a squalid waterfront house in Osaka. His troubles with the family, their troubles among themselves, his difficulties with the police and with gangsters are the stuff of the story (adapted from a novel) but not really the stuff of the film.

Imamura's films, of which I've seen six, are marked by a contradictory combination of gruffness and objectivity. He tears out chunks of life as he sees it around him, then serves it up without judgment or bias. Ogata tries to be philosophical about his job, asserting that he serves a communal need, at the same time that he is willing to use a helpless idiot girl in a film. He has genuine feeling for the widow and her children at the same time that he is sexually injurious to both mother and daughter. Imamura doesn't balance these and other matters in a moral ledger:

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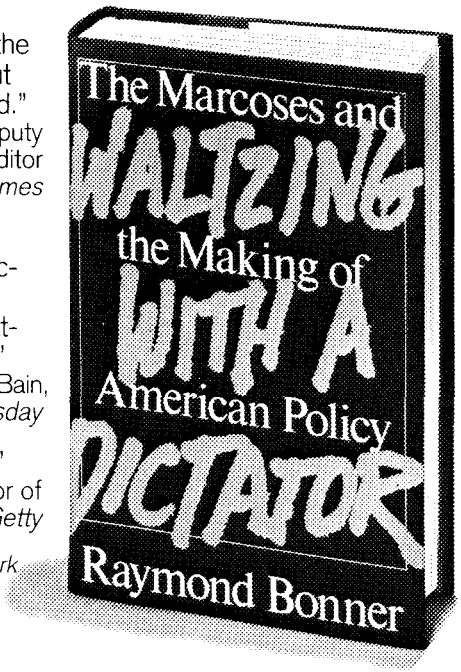

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they all simply exist.

His attitude is perfectly caught in his style, helped by a fine cinematographer, Shinsaku Himeda. The opening shot of a city street is filled with a throng all of whom are individualized. The long shots of the back porch of the widow's house, seen packed between other houses, are like slices of an anthill at the same time that the relevant characters are sharply defined. No Imamura film that I've seen is completely realized, except perhaps *Vengeance Is Mine*, but all are gripping—the work of a man with unique eyes and, beneath his cool vision, an almost angry compassion.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Cold Hearts

Les Liaisons Dangereuses was written in the last decades of the 18th century by a French career officer, Pierre-Ambroise-François Choderlos de Laclos, who, bored at his post in the Bay of Biscay, had determined to dazzle his contemporaries with a scandalous novel. Like the better natured, more erotic 18th-century English pornographic romp *Fanny Hill*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* was an explosive charge in an age of extreme social hypocrisy, when human relations, especially between the sexes, were usually treated as occasions for romantic sensibility and good breeding. English literature of the time was dominated by sentimental tragedies (Lillo), sentimental comedies (Steele), and sentimental novels (Richardson), while in France the *comédie larmoyante* and *drame bourgeois*, in the hands of such as Diderot, Beaumarchais, and Voltaire, were washing the populace with unguents of delicate feeling and democratic sentiment. In such an atmosphere, a remorseless tale of aristocratic intrigue, in which erotic relations were less a source of pleasure or romance than of dominance, cruelty, and power, was destined to become a work of high subversion, similar to the assaults of Lenny Bruce on the heavily guarded moral ramparts of Eisenhower's America.

Christopher Hampton's adaptation of this novel, now playing in a Royal Shakespeare Company production at the Music Box, manages to preserve the coldhearted machinations of the characters while introducing a moral and historical perspective that seems at once clever and oversaturated with hindsight. Technically, Hampton has achieved a considerable degree of success in transforming a Richardson-like epistolary novel (*Les Liaisons Dangereuses* is a series of letters exchanged between the two protagonists) into a dramatic action without violating the plot, the theme, or the invidious nature of the characters. His one lapse, I believe, is to bring the moral paraphernalia and social indignation of a later age to bear on events of the past. Choderlos de Laclos's two central figures suffer violent ends—Valmont is killed in a duel and Merteuil is disfigured by the pox—but this is less a form of retribution than the inexorable working out of their fates. At the end of Hampton's play, the tumbrils are rolling, the guillotine is preparing to fall, a whole aristocratic class will be exterminated for the symbolic peccadilloes of Valmont and Merteuil.

Bored and heartless eroticism among the upper classes may have been one of the causes of the French Revolution, but it is wrong, I think, to take the behavior of these two aristocrats as typical, since their success in seduction is largely due to the innocence of their equally well-born victims. This is like suggesting a social-political convulsion would result from Don Juan's debauching of womanhood, when it is his very moral neutrality that makes him so unique among his own class. La Marquise de Merteuil and Le Vicomte de Valmont are also unique creatures and for much the same reason—their imperviousness to conventional moral law. They operate in the social waters of this story like great white sharks among a school of groupers, and you do not predicate the extermination of an entire world of fish on the behavior of a single predatory species.

Apart from the final moments of the play, however, Hampton manages to control his moralizing and allow his characters the full expression of their fascinating amorality. The metaphor that frames the action is that of a game—the action begins and ends with ladies playing piquet. For Merteuil and Valmont, former lovers now devoted to helping each other achieve new conquests, sex is equivalent to a game of cards and they are the card sharps—seductions are their hidden trumps. Valmont is intrigued by two new challenges to his seductive powers: one a 15-year-old convent girl named Cécile Volanges, the other a married woman famed for her virtue, La Presidente de Tourvel. Cécile offers no particular difficulty. She is in love with Le Chevalier Danceny and, under the pretext of helping to unite the young lovers, Valmont obtains the key to her room and half seduces, half forces himself on the unwitting girl. Before long, she has become an adept—rather like the female innocents of English Restoration drama who, however guarded they are from the ways of the world, soon prove more lusty and insatiable in their appetites than the wildest courtesans.

La Presidente de Tourvel presents a considerably greater challenge, and Valmont's approach to her displays the finesse of a master craftsman. Like Molière's Don Juan, he first pretends to piety and, when that doesn't work, admits he's a dissolute reformed by her virtue. What really wins her, however, is his shrewd refusal to take advantage of her momentary weakness when, in a remarkable scene of emotional ambivalence, wavering between guilt and passion, she finally admits her love. Not long after, he has achieved his goal and is boasting about the "unprecedented" event to Merteuil.

It is at this point that these two scorpions, so perfectly mated in their cold venomousness, turn on each other with stingers raised. Merteuil can accept Valmont's promiscuity as part of the game. What she cannot endure is genuine love, and Valmont, for the first time in his life, has fallen passionately in love—with Tourvel. Arguing that he is about to become a laughingstock, Merteuil insists that he break off this "unsuitable" relationship. Valmont agrees, treating Tourvel with unspeakable cruelty ("My love had great difficulty outlasting your virtue"), only to break off Merteuil's relationship with Cécile's swain, Danceny, in revenge. The hatred of the two antagonists turns vicious and, manipulated by Merteuil, Danceny kills Valmont in a duel ("In this affair," gasps the dying vicomte, "we are both her creatures"). Tourvel retreats to a convent and dies in delirium and convulsions; Cécile is des-

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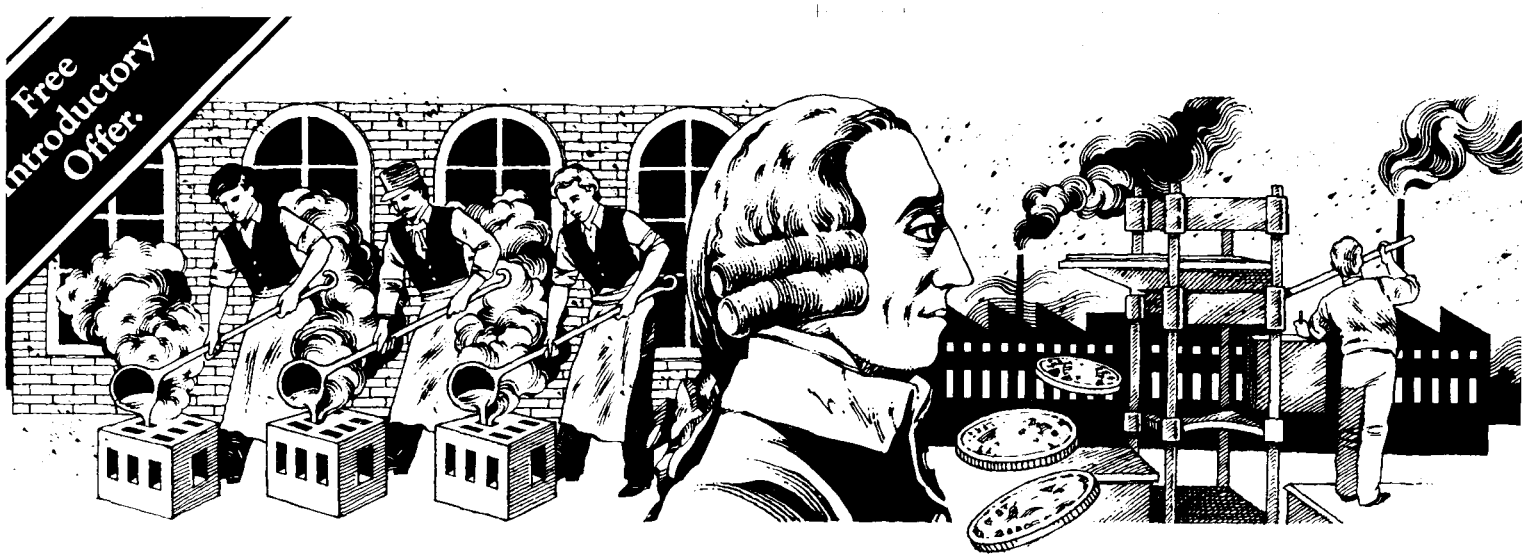

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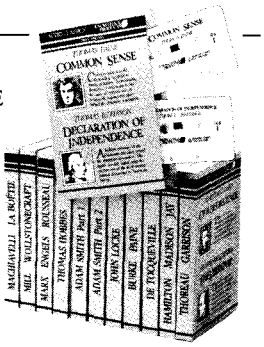

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tined for a convent too; and Merteuil, "halfway through the '80s" and looking forward to "whatever the '90s may bring," suggests that the only thing left is "to continue with the game."

Love and death have always been the staples of European literature, but not until Strindberg, and to a lesser extent Wagner, have the fatal consequences of erotic entanglements been so profoundly explored as in this singular work by Choderlos de Laclos (well, perhaps we should also acknowledge his contemporary, the Marquis de Sade). Lacking models of a similar kind in the English tradition, Hampton has borrowed his style from the one body of literature that continually equates sex not with romance but with cruelty and power, while valuing exterior reputation over inner integrity—namely, Restoration comedy. His Valmont and Merteuil resemble a more ruthless Mirabel and Millamant; Valmont's servant is a cockney; and the dialogue, while lacking epigrammatic form, is a compound of wit parrying and elegant sangfroid: "You've given me great pleasure," remarks Valmont to Tourvel, "but I just can't bring myself to regret leaving you. It's the way of the world." Moreover, the play (and in this it more resembles its source) is almost totally lacking in any real sensual moments—with the possible exception of Cécile's deflowering, and even this is signified by a single surprised gasp. D. H. Lawrence chided contemporary literature for being about sex in the head; *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* is more akin to sex in the pancreas, composed as it is of generous secretions of acid and bile.

Still, the evening is continually engrossing, and Howard Davis's production has the sharpness of an incision. Bob Crowley has designed a world of the boudoir decorated with smoky lattices and unmade beds and open drawers spilling silks, linens, laces. The interiors are in light pastels, the costumes virtually all in white as if to contrast with the tainted bodies they cover. Alan Rickman, as Valmont, grungily bearded with a three-day Arafat growth, moves with a languor that speaks of supreme boredom. Lacking the energy even to raise his voice—it's a marvel he can be heard at all—he sustains a performance of leonine grace and danger with an effortlessness that almost seems at times to lack dramatic tension. Lindsay Duncan as Merteuil—a woman "meant to dominate your sex and avenge my own"—is frigidly beautiful, like a glacier, and equally unlikely to melt. She is stirred only by the passion of revenge, heated only by cunning, provoked only by the hope of conquest. But I was the most impressed with Suzanne Burden as La Presidente de Tourvel, for it is she who has the opportunity to move beyond brittle technical resources into emotional deeps. Depicting Tourvel as a woman torn between uncontrollable passion for Valmont and loathing for her own feelings, Burden performs the seduction scene with a wrenching reality. I have rarely seen the traditional conflict between Love and Honor more convincingly portrayed.

I must also express my admiration for the other principals in the cast, Kristin Milward, Beatie Edney, Jean Anderson, Lucy Aston, Hilton McRae. Together with the playwright, the director, and the designers, they help to bring an extraordinary, though not widely known, work of literature to the attention of a popular audience. Heaven knows how this audience will receive it, since *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* is not a work that speaks very warmly of humankind, and once again it emerges in an age of romantic lies and democratic pieties. Even with Hampton's moralistic ending, however, the play is a bracing antidote to romanticism and sentimentality, exposing the inner labyrinths of erotic transactions, the spiritual sores that lie beneath the powdered surface of sexual relations.

DIRTY REPRESENTATIONS

The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture by Walter Kendrick

(Viking, 288 pp., $18.95)

Walter Kendrick's new study of "pornography in modern culture" is an interesting, potentially important, and finally disappointing work. It starts out promisingly with a humorous and enlightening inquiry into the origins of the modern use of the term itself, and of the conceptions it refers to. Kendrick locates both in a nexus of circumstances that extended roughly from the middle of the 18th to the middle of the 19th centuries. It was after 1740 that concerted work on the excavations of the buried cities around Mount Vesuvius was begun. The erotic relics, objects, statues, and paintings that were progressively unearthed, Kendrick writes, "made a profound impression on the imagination of Western culture." Almost at once they became a subject for wide and varied discussion (and created an obligatory day trip for tourists; what was to become the modern tourist industry was at the time in a thriving state of infancy). Responses to this material were from the very outset marked by general uneasiness, and ranged between widely separated extremes: from shock, indignation, and moral condemnation, to "neutral" scholarly curiosity, to praise from disciples of Rousseau for the "innocence" and "naturalness" of our classical ancestors in their dealings with matters that we corrupted moderns regard as indecent and vicious.

At something of a loss as to how such priceless obscenities ought properly to be managed, the authorities in charge of these newly recovered—and therefore new—cultural artifacts settled upon a policy of restriction: a special name, pornography, was eventually chosen for the salacious treasures, and special places of limited access were to be created as their repository—to be called, depending upon national location, a "secret museum," or a "closed case," or "*Enfer*," or a "special collection" of some nominally unspecific but clearly forbidden provenance. It was in this context that the word entered English in the 1850s, in a translation from a German volume of classical art history whose author had in turn found the term *pornographoi* ("whore-painters") in a second-century Greek text and who applied it to obscene classical representations as a whole.

To compound the intricacies and the deviousness by which the term was instituted, "pornography" was also used almost instantly to describe the new and increasingly numerous medical investigations of prostitution that enjoyed something of a vogue in mid-19th-century England and France. Thus when the Oxford English Dictionary published its volume containing the letter "P" in 1909, the word was defined first with reference to a medical dictionary of 1857,

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and is rendered as "a description of prostitutes or prostitution, as a matter of public hygiene." This is historically inexact, chronologically imprecise, and makes no sense in terms of modern usage. The OED's second definition is an attempt to extend this obsolete and defensive mid-19th-century use in the direction of the present and so to rectify it: "Description of the life, manners, etc., of prostitutes and their patrons; hence the expression or suggestion of obscene or unchaste subjects in literature and art." Covertly, then, the great dictionary's double definition makes the transition that would have dismayed those who were originally most exercised by the necessity to quarantine the subjects in question. The OED reveals itself, as it so often does, as Q.E.D. as well.

It is much to Kendrick's credit that he does not consider this definitional fractiousness and amusing muddlement as simply a matter either of lexicographical prissiness or 19th-century reticence and prudery. He understands that it is inseparable from the larger questions of how sexuality is to be represented in modern culture. A kind of double bind attaches to almost every delineation of sexuality. Any public depiction or even discussion of the subject tends to make it "promiscuously available." To "shine light on dark corners," Kendrick observes, "makes those corners known and possibly seductive." Hence there is a structural similarity between all representations of sexuality, whether they are made with the deliberate intention of incitement or are conducted within the approved confines of the institutions of medicine, scholarship, or science.

Almost any discussion of sexuality is, therefore, *tout court* a dissemination of it. (My own work on the subject has been accused both in and out of print of being precisely that.) The very attempt to regulate it by certain kinds of public discourse simultaneously acts as an unwitting means of wider publication. And any departure from a policy of strict restriction and seclusion falls into such contradictions. The slipperiness, ambiguity, and uncertainty that surrounded the term "pornography" from the moment of its invention were expressions of the circumstance that the category itself was hopelessly mixed—it was from the outset impure, intellectually and otherwise.

Having established this, Kendrick undertakes to tell a series of stories. He goes back to what he calls the "Pre-Pornographic Era" and surveys in summary fashion how representations in general, and sexual representations in particular, were made and thought about in classical antiquity and in pre-modern times. In this connection, he regards Plato, quite correctly, as the first important anti-representationalist. He discusses Catullus and other Latin writers, jumps over a millennium or so, and starts up again in the 16th century with Aretino, moves on to Rochester, rehearses once again the invention/discovery/evolution of pornography out of the much older and broader conception of the obscene, and then moves on to the early modern era—to the beginning of the expurgation of books and plays in the 18th century, to *Fanny Hill*, to the Marquis de Sade and other familiar landmarks.

Kendrick proceeds into the 19th century and recounts the rise of what we have come to call the pornography business as one of those collateral phenomena that accompanied the immense changes that are invoked by such terms as urbanization, modernization, industrialism, and mass literacy. Then, in a strategic error, he chooses to follow the legal

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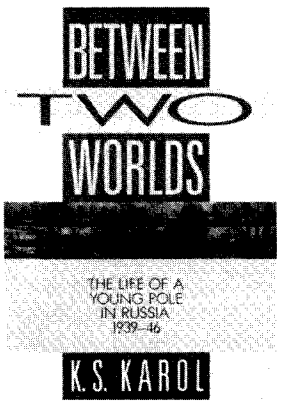

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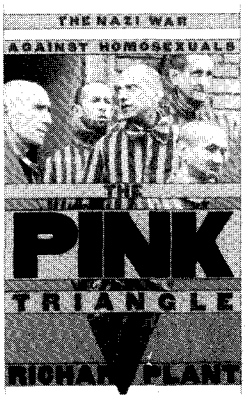

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history of obscenity in France, Britain, and America, and this extremely familiar and well-worn material, to which he adds to my knowledge almost nothing new, makes up the substance of the rest of his book. We read once again about the attempt to suppress *Madame Bovary* in 1857, and in the same year, across the Channel, of the passage into law of the Obscene Publications Act. We are treated to yet another recounting of *Regina v. Hicklin* (1868) and Lord Cockburn's famous "test" of obscenity, namely "whether the tendency of the matter charged . . . is to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences, and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall." Skipping across the Atlantic, he tells us at length about the career of Anthony Comstock, 19th-century America's leading crusader against sex. He then moves back again to Britain for the Besant-Bradlaugh prosecution, the anti-Zola mania, and, not quite pertinently, the trials of Oscar Wilde.

And then we zoom through the 20th century, mostly in American courtrooms. *Ulysses* is set free, as in due time is just about everything else. Kendrick dutifully follows the course of judicial opinions, mostly issuing from the Supreme Court, and notes how the decisions, though they may seem to zig here and zag there, move generally toward liberalization and permissiveness, a tendency that he wholeheartedly endorses, though it is not exactly evident why he does so. His lack of clarity on this account is the counterpart of the babel that has issued from our judicial chambers themselves, as time and again one court after another has tried to make sense out of material that has demonstrated throughout its history that it is more or less legally intractable.

KENDRICK closes his volume with a chapter unfortunately entitled "The Post-Pornographic Era," which brings matters up to date. In this contemporary context, he discusses two important documents produced by the federal government. The first of these was the report of the Commission on Pornography and Obscenity, published in 1970; it tried to deal with the state of disarray on the subject by recommending, in its own words, that all "federal, state, and legal legislation prohibiting the sale, exhibition, or distribution of sexual material to consenting adults be repealed." The second was the *Final Report* of the current attorney general's Commission on Pornography, which appeared last summer.

That large two-volume document seems designed, in Kendrick's apt phrasing, "to obliterate the 1970 *Report*—indeed, the entire 20th century." The *Final Report* does in fact read as if it had been written by Neanderthals, and one of the more interesting things about it is its alliance with certain radical feminist views that assert that pornography actually causes violence against women. Kendrick strongly disagrees with this claim, as he does with the entirety of the attorney general's *Final Report*, and it is on this less than resonant note that the book ends. If you can imagine yourself leafing through a copy of *Hustler* while you are seated in a 747 on your way across an ocean, and can at the same time understand what it means to refer to our age as post-pornographic and post-industrial, then you will have attained to the kind of clarity of mind and purpose that this book induces.

ITS CHRONOLOGICAL range notwithstanding, Kendrick's treatment of human sexuality, and of its representation in our culture, is finally unhistorical and fundamentally unserious. For example, Kendrick states that the Victorians had "a sense of the danger inherent in books and pictures that made prior ages seem sophisticated by comparison." They also had a similar innocence about sex. And hence they created a category, namely pornography, that had not existed before, by reason of their "overvaluing both sex and representations." These assertions are profoundly unacceptable. They assume an unwarranted moral and intellectual superiority to the past. They are, in addition, extremely misleading, since they further imply that the true value of sexuality or its representations is known to us, or is something we may somehow measure, when such is anything but the case.

Kendrick is obliquely aware that he has dug a very deep hole for himself with such statements, and occasionally he tries to climb out of it with the help of qualifying disclaimers, but they don't work. Later he writes that

> the Victorians understood "sex" well enough; what they failed to grasp fully—though they learned it and taught it to us—was that the corrupting power of book or picture varies hugely, depending on how it conveys its impression and how those impressions are received.

This sentence contradicts what has gone before, namely that it was precisely "sex" among a host of other things that the Victorians didn't understand. But it also contradicts itself: If they didn't "grasp" something "fully," how did they at the same time "learn it"? Its last part consists of tautologies and truisms, and says everything and nothing at once. Representations in print can corrupt or they can not corrupt. It all depends on their objective natures and the subjective responses of their audience. Anything is possible, and nothing really applies.

FOR THE MOST PART, however, Kendrick adheres to his line of modern enlightened superiority. What the benighted Victorians feared, he writes, was "the habit of private imaginative stimulation." They were afraid that such stimulation would induce undesirable behavior. "Then as now," he goes on, "the structure of fear, the knee-jerk scenario it conjured up, stood firm in the virtual absence of evidence that such responses ever in fact occurred." Now, it is a risky business to fall back upon one's own experience, or upon the historical experience of the human race (if we did, we would probably still believe that the earth was flat); but in this instance I believe that we are justified in doing so. How can one doubt that imaginations or "imaginative stimulation" ultimately issues in actions of some kind? Only by adhering to a rigid behaviorist model of stimulus-response without the benefit of any mental mediation; but in that instance the jerk is on the other knee. This unwarranted pooh-poohing of the powers of representations to affect us is not only mindless in itself, it attributes mindlessness to the rest of us. It implies that when it comes to reading or seeing our minds are pretty much inert or passive entities.

Kendrick is at least partly alive to this danger, and periodically gestures in the other direction. He writes that the principle of modernism, "along with the pervasive influence of Freud and his followers, has resulted in a prevailing anti-Comstockery that is almost as oppressive as its defeated counterpart." I don't know what Freud is doing in that sentence, since he was never an advocate of unlimited license; nor do I know exactly what Kendrick means by "oppressive," though surely there is something tediously dreary about the atmosphere of thoughtless license that tends to prevail in certain parts of the Western world today. But Kendrick seems to want to dance at everybody's wedding.

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Similarly, he remarks:

> It is by no means certain . . . that the gradual unfettering of the printed word has been an unmitigated boon. . . . The liberation of writing from the shackles of moral censorship has proceeded apace with the loss of the belief . . . that writing wields immediate force upon its reader. That belief remains as strong as ever when it comes to pictures, still or moving; but the peril of print has nearly vanished.

Here his irresolution seems more justified. Something has indeed been lost, namely a credulousness about the "quasi-magical" power of words. But this liberation from error has also entailed another loss of something that may have been a good, namely our belief in the power of language in print to move and to affect us. We are returned, in short, to the global condition that Max Weber memorably referred to as "the disenchantment of the world."

At the very end of the book, Kendrick steps back for a moment and speculates about what it might have been like had pornography never been invented, and had all the agonizings over it never occurred. "We would be living, then, in a safer though utterly more arid world." Apart from the possibility that a century and a half of cultural controversy has made for an interesting spectacle, it remains altogether uncertain what this statement means. Since Kendrick is a thoroughgoing libertarian, who believes that it is "absurd . . . to suppose that the suppression of the image can prevent the perpetration of the deed," it is impossible to ascertain what peril is implied by his use of "safer."

KENDRICK'S incoherence is, I believe, a result of his consistent unwillingness to admit that the larger problems presented by pornography remain unsolved and unresolved; he tends generally to avoid any sustained discussion of either the "causes" of pornography, or of its powers of attraction/repulsion, or of its influence, as he also avoids discussion of most of its possible larger cultural and moral consequences. Instead he makes do with half-witty asides and parenthetical semiqualifications, with the result that he frequently writes likes a wiseass. But the discussion of these difficult matters must begin, I believe, with the acknowledgment that we do not know with any certainty very much about either sexuality or representations.

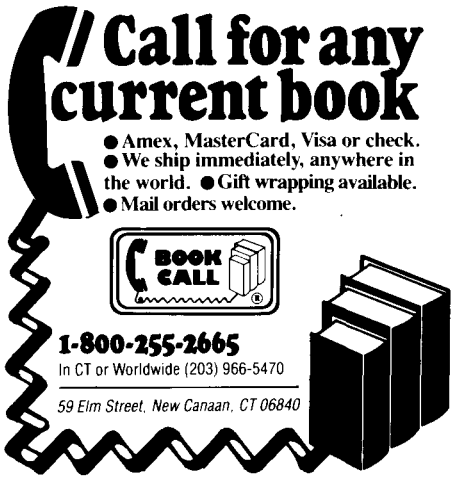
In all likelihood most people in the 19th century did tend to misestimate both the irresistible force and the peremptory danger of sexuality. There is one passage from that era that dramatizes these attitudes with great saliency. It occurs in *The Kreutzer Sonata*, a late novella by Tolstoy that was once widely popular but today goes almost unread. At one point the bedeviled protagonist cries out:

> If the aim of mankind is happiness, goodness, love . . . then what stands in the way of the attainment of this aim? Human passions do! Of all passions, the most powerful and vicious and obstinate is sexual, carnal love; and so, if passions are annihilated and with them the most powerful—carnal love—then the prophecy [of humanity's redemption] will be fulfilled.

The intensity of this utterance suggests something of the plight in which large numbers of people felt they were desperately embroiled. These beliefs were neither uniform nor universal, nor did they go unchallenged; but they were widespread enough to create (and indeed continue) a prevailing and powerful current of thought and opinion in the culture the 20th century inherited.

Today we have learned a great deal more, of course, about sexuality than was known in 1890; we hold different judgments about it than Tolstoy did; and we would probably say that the most vicious and dangerous of human passions is aggression. But this does not mean that sexuality is not extremely powerful or important, or that we understand satisfactorily its place in the scheme of things. To put it minimally, sexuality continues to be causally entwined in much human misery, and in some forms today it can be downright lethal. To doubt that we have our own full share of anxieties about sex (many of them identical with those experienced in the past) is, to put the matter euphemistically, like denying the nose on one's face. It remains a primordial—if no longer a sacred—mystery.

A SIMILAR ARRAY of uncertainties exists in connection with the authority that can be attributed to pornographic representations, both written and pictorial. We simply don't know enough about the matter. But we do know a few things: that most people can be sexually stimulated by things they read or by pictures they see; that sexual arousal is usually accompanied by fantasies; that these fantasies, plus the state of arousal, can often lead to some form of sexual behavior, such as masturbation or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some kind of non-solitary activity. The difference between ourselves and those 19th-century people that Kendrick finds so comical is that we don't, for instance, think that masturbation is unconditionally bad: it doesn't soften your bones, weaken your intellect, drive you crazy, or automatically turn you into a social menace. The same holds for most forms of adult heterosexual behavior: most liberal people tend to regard such activities rather benignly. This does *not* mean that representations do not affect us; it means that our attitudes toward sexuality have changed.

What we are primarily perturbed about today are activities that involve coercion and violence, such as rape and the sexual abuse of children, as well as the exposure of young children to pornographic material. And when it comes to such behavior we plainly do not know what degree or manner of influence such representations exert. Nor do we know how important such promptings are when they are cast into the balance with the host of other circumstances that go into the formation of the motives that lead to action. Nevertheless, to deny any authority at all to representations because we cannot prove precisely just what influence they do have is to commit the inverted counterpart of the error that was pervasive in the 19th century, when it was asserted that exposure to representations led directly and without complex mediations to harmful behavior.

These distinctions are particularly important for the study of literature, which is where Kendrick comes in again, since he has taught English at Fordham University. If you take an essentially libertarian view, as Kendrick does, you tend toward one of two general conclusions. You can admit that representations do matter and do influence us, but that the value of freedom is so extraordinary that it transcends considerations of prudence, order, and control, and that we simply have to take our chances with freedom's negative consequences. This is certainly a tenable view, and one that I regard with respect. The other view is expressed in the contention that representations, especially in print, really don't matter that much if they matter at all. That conviction, held by a teacher and critic of literature, leads in turn to some kind of extreme formalism, or to an aestheticism of art for art's sake, or to some variant of poststructuralism, or to Kendrick's occasional observation that this whole storm in a condom has really been a displaced dispute over "power"—that is, over who is controlling what and whom.

The truth is that most of us are indeed vexed by these questions, and for good reason: they involve different values, each of which is a great good, and each of which may sometimes be in conflict with the other. Most of us believe in freedom of expression, and in the general freedom to read or see whatever is published. We believe that such freedoms are individual goods and communal goods. But we believe, too, that as a community we also have a right to protect ourselves and our fellow members against certain kinds of behavior, and that this right, which is also an obligation, may entail the limitation of certain of the freedoms that are goods.

If in fact we do come to believe that representations may exercise an influence upon behavior—and there is some evidence that they do, though it has not gone unchallenged—then there is at least a case to be made for some curtailment of access to representations of which we disapprove. (And these representations are by no stretch of the imagination confined to pornography: think what would be left of films or television if we were to act on the certitude that representations of violence lead to violent behavior.) The problem of pornography points, in sum, to a genuine conflict of real and extremely important values. It is not, as Kendrick would largely try to persuade us, a factitious set of anxieties cooked up in the fevered imaginations of Plato and some bewildered Victorians.

STEVEN MARCUS

Steven Marcus is George Delacorte Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University.

HOW THEY SPELLED RELIEF

The Brutality of Nations
by Dan Jacobs

(Knopf, 383 pp., $22.95)

There is a particularly memorable scene in this compelling account of the politics of international relief during the war between Nigeria and Biafra. We're inside 10 Downing Street in January 1970. Harold Wilson, the urbane, pipe-smoking Labour prime minister, is musing on what they used to call the "real hard numbers" of realpolitik. With the PM are Walter Annenberg, our man at the Court of St. James's by way of *TV Guide* and handsome campaign contributions to Richard Nixon, and C. Clyde Ferguson, an ex-dean of Howard Law School, who has been appointed Washington's token black relief emissary to take the congressional heat off, and who now stands a bit shocked and befuddled in the corridors of power. A soft-minded world, Wilson admonishes them, has just never understood the strategic stakes in this Nigeria-Biafra business. "If a million Ibos had . . . to die to preserve the unity of Nigeria, well, that was not too high a price to pay."

It is all a little reminiscent of Sir Edward Grey's famous moment on an August evening in 1914 when he stood at his office window and saw the lights going out all over Europe for a generation. Aptly less elegant, Wilson's remark to Annenberg and Ferguson is no less a capturing epigram for our era, more than a half century later. The lights have been going out all over the Third World in this generation. And while we have publicly, unctuously deplored the darkness and suffering, we have quietly helped pull the plug.

Readers may find it hard to believe that the events described in this book began 20 years ago this spring. The images have become too permanent, immediate, timeless. Smarting from decades of persecution, and spurred by the latest round of bloody pogroms, the gifted Ibo minority seceded from the patchwork British colonial device that was Nigeria. The Federal Government promptly surrounded the new state of Biafra, proceeding to blockade and starve out the rebellion when its British- and Soviet-armed but somewhat desultory troops could not do the job militarily. For the next two-and-a-half years, diplomats rushed to and fro. There were impas-

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sioned speeches and debates on Capitol Hill and in Westminster. Shocking stories were leaked, followed by indignant official denials. Earnest, gruesome nutritional surveys were made, and duly ignored or covered up by embassies and foreign ministries. Chiefs of state were enlisted to anguish, to promise aid, to front for the hidden disgrace and dishonor. The drama had all the requisite ingredients: a domino theory expounded by half-literate State Department clerks, great power rivalries, even oil. The Biafrans, you see, had the temerity to declare their independence right atop one of Shell BP's most promising basins.

It was a nasty war by both belligerents. But the real brutality, as so often in African history, came from the outside. The British held on to their motley prize colony with a cravenness and cynicism unique even in the annals of empire. The French, in matching jaundice, armed the Biafrans. The Russians backed the Nigerians. The Chinese secretly sent weapons and money to whoever opposed the Russians' clients. The Israelis played both ends against the middle. And the United States watched the spectacle in unrelieved hypocrisy, parading its humanitarian aid and quietly condoning Britain's genocide by proxy. Behind it all, a million people hungered and sickened and died, "deliberately starved," as Dan Jacobs puts it plainly. Most of them, as usual, were the old and the very young. The other side of the zealous bureaucrats and hand-wringing politicians was always a gaunt child, without the strength of tears, dying in its own excrement near some place called Owerri or Uli or Aba.

JACOBS, a former spokesman for the United Nations and one of the organizers of the private relief efforts, saw much of what happened from the inside. He has written a vivid, carefully documented history of the episode, an almost death-by-death account of the premeditated failure of international relief, and an indictment of the man-made horror all the more stunning for its modulated tone.

The story unfolds from the perspective of the tangled relief diplomacy, the efforts of international agencies to get food inside the starving Biafran enclave and the cruel calculus of governments that celebrated mercy even while they relentlessly obstructed it. But Jacobs has also written a perceptive chronicle of the war itself, and of that now subtle, now grotesque border of politics and culture at which Africa and the West meet so uneasily. He gives the diplomatic and strategic rationalizations for inaction the intellectual contempt they always deserved, and rightly fingers Britain and the United States as the worst of the unsavory international lot, distinguished by the sheer depth of their pretense and self-deception. Nor, unlike his counterparts in the State Department, does Jacobs have difficulty fathoming the moral question in international law and foreign policy, that enduring, inexplicably unanswered query of the Holocaust—whether (Jacobs quotes Raphael Lemkin) "sovereignty goes so far that a government can destroy with impunity its own citizens and whether such acts of destruction are domestic affairs or matters of international concern."

Two decades after the event, it is now clear how much the extinction of Biafra, the cynical exploitation and abandonment of its children, was a portent of world politics to come. Even as he was posturing as an American agent in the Nigerian civil war, Haile Selassie was covering up (just as his successors would) the Ethiopian famine that would bring him down; and the train of expressionless, spindly figures was to be without end—Bangladesh, the Sahel, Burundi and Uganda, Cambodia. Each time, the ghosts of Biafra hovered over the scene. Each time governments, led by the United States, "expressed concern," donated food with some fanfare, secretly found political or diplomatic or bureaucratic reasons for tempering their compassion, ultimately watched millions perish whom they might have saved.

Read Jacobs's matter-of-fact summary of Biafra's nightmare, where bureaucracy preys on public shallowness and numbness. Without dates or placenames, it is an interchangeable form registering the pedestrian inhumanity of our "humanitarian" diplomacy:

> The public could not follow the complex negotiations and get to the bottom of who was blocking food shipments. They did not know what to believe. They only knew the starvation continued—getting worse, getting better, getting worse again. The confusion and anguish sapped their emotions. The ordeal became too protracted; they turned away finding it too painful to continue to watch, helpless to do anything.
>
> Those involved in relief, trying to get food and medical care to people on both sides of the fighting, knew who was blocking their efforts. Those in official positions who knew did not speak out to inform the public. Those of us who tried found our efforts thwarted as effectively as were attempts to get food to the starving. Just how this was being done was not clear.

The consummate service of *The Brutality of Nations* is to provide an answer to that last mystery.

IF THE book has a flaw, it is, sadly, that not even Jacobs's honed outrage conveys accurately or fully the boardroom savagery and callousness that lay behind the governments' studied blindness to all the suffering. There is something about Jacobs, as there is about other decent, caring, astute men and women of the international relief efforts, of the innocence and the plaintiveness of people who, despite their hard-won sophistication, never knew altogether what hit them.

These disasters always have suitable sequels, of course, though the details tend to be buried with the last dead children. Nigeria went on to the essential unity for which Harold Wilson was willing to pay so lavishly in Ibo lives. The country has gone through a comic-tragic string of civilian and military regimes remarkable only for their common corruption and incompetence. For their part, the Ibos either accommodated or were crushed after the war. Educated young men who might have led one of Africa's more enlightened governments now drive taxis in Washington, D.C. Nigeria

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does send much of its oil to the United States, but the perversities of a cartel and petroleum economy have left a ravaged agriculture and urban slums that are one of Africa's Marxist delights—one of the nice little ironies of all those arguments about keeping Nigeria out of the Soviet orbit by keeping food from the Biafrans.

Jacobs wants to remedy all this by building a more effective international coalition for humanitarian aid, by lobbying more persuasively. I wish him well. There is a sense in which doing what is right in foreign affairs is always in our strategic self-interest. But this fine, long overdue book begs yet another, even more taxing answer. For the starting point of foreign policy, as Marechal de Saxe said of war, is the human heart. The sociology of this disaster was never abstract or ultimately anonymous. The brutality of "nations" was simply the brutality of ordinary men—careerists, bureaucrats, time-servers in positions of authority far beyond their capacities. They were, in the end and in truth, ignorant, sometimes arrogant men living a divorce between knowing and feeling, and governing life and death thousands of miles away without personal or public accountability. Unlike the Ibos or even the victorious Nigerians, these faraway people went on from the calamity to comfortable retirement, some even to official honors or to teach a new generation of diplomats at Washington universities, their role hidden in the blanket immunity of national policy.

Unless we come to terms with precisely this outrage and this irresponsibility—that is to say, with the human dimensions of diplomacy—no amount of international lobbying is going to rescue us, or the next generation of victims. What Biafra begs is nothing less than a radical rethinking of international affairs, of foreign policy, of the national interest, and, most of all, of the kind of people and education and safeguards we want in our foreign service and policy-making bureaucracy. In that sense, Biafra was the prologue to the Iranian arms scandal, and to much more. Jacobs has conscientiously fashioned a mirror of some clarity in this story. There is no mistaking the reflection.

ROGER MORRIS

Roger Morris was a member of the National Security Council staff for African affairs from 1967 to 1970. He and his wife, Kathrin Morris, are working on a biography of Richard Nixon, to be published by Harper & Row.

THE DICTATOR'S DICTATION

I The Supreme
by Augusto Roa Bastos
translated by Helen Lane

(Knopf, 438 pp., $18.95; Vintage, $10.95 paper)

For more than a decade the Paraguayan novelist Augusto Roa Bastos has been regarded in Latin America as a major writer. In the years since the publication of his masterpiece *Yo El Supremo* in 1974, hundreds of articles examining the novel have appeared, and an authoritative critical edition was published in Madrid in 1983. When Carlos Fuentes recently declared the book "one of the milestones of the Latin American novel," he was merely confirming what had long been taken for granted south of our border. Now that a superb English translation of this dauntingly complex work is at last available, readers in this country will be in a position to see for themselves why Latin American critics have been moved to invoke the names of Joyce and Musil, Cervantes and Rabelais to describe the breadth and ambition of *I The Supreme*.

A great many Latin American novels have been haunted by the idea of the dictator, and several of the most famous of these actually revolve around a dictator figure. One thinks immediately of Gabriel García Márquez's *Autumn of the Patriarch*, or of Alejo Carpentier's *Reasons of State*, or of an earlier novel like Miguel Angel Asturias's *El Señor Presidente*. Often the dictator in these novels is a composite portrait modeled on various originals, with the consequence that the character seems larger than life, so awesome in the range of his brutalities that he is less a person than he is a force of nature. Other writers work from a single model, with results that vary from one case to another. Roa Bastos has written about an actual dictator, a singular historical figure, but he has nonetheless attributed to him extraordinary powers; and though he has resisted the mystifications associated with novels in which the dictator is a force of nature and therefore unaccountable to any mundane human law, he has made his human-all-too-human character an impressively ubiquitous figure about whose virtues and defects we are often in doubt. We may feel, as we study the world dominated by this dictator, that there is no one else to whom blame might reasonably be assigned, but at the same time we are loath to apply the categorical judgments to which representations of tyranny usually tempt us. To compare Roa's dictator with other despots in Latin American fiction is to feel that Roa's is distinguished not only by the quantity of detail lavished on him, but by his remarkable capacity to seem at one moment a person, at another an embodiment of contradictory elements not usually identified with a single person, let alone a powerful tyrant.

To speak of Roa's dictator as having been drawn from a model is in some sense to misrepresent him, for the character is never really permitted to stand free of the original. In important ways we are dealing here with a historical novel, a work incorporating actual, named personages who have a documented existence outside the pages of the fiction. Roa's dictator is not "based on" the 19th-century Paraguayan despot José Gaspar Rodriguez Francia who, in 1816, brought his country to independence; in many ways he is, palpably and persuasively, Francia himself. Though much that he is made to say has obviously been invented by Roa, it is difficult to think of the dictator in this novel as an invented character subject to the writer's imperial whim. So consistently does the novel make use of documents well known to students of 19th-century Latin American politics, and so frequently are the words used to describe the dictator taken verbatim from 19th-century accounts of people who knew Francia, that even the most unlikely statements made by the character inspire us to feel that they might indeed have come from Francia himself. A novel containing nu-

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merous footnotes and quotations, as this one does, inevitably encourages us to believe that we are dealing with facts, or at least with plausible hypotheses and extrapolations.

FRANCIA IS HARDLY a household name in the English-speaking world today, but he was much discussed in the mid-19th century. Thomas Carlyle's long essay "Dr. Francia" was written in 1843 in response to several books about the leader, who ruled Paraguay from 1816 to 1840, and it seems fair to say that Roa has been deeply influenced by Carlyle's account. By 1843 Carlyle was into the phase of his career that produced "On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History" and the superb work of social criticism *Past and Present*. He treats Francia as a man with the stuff of heroes in him, a figure impressive and forbidding, alternately foolish and inspired, credulous and cunning.

But Carlyle knows that in important respects Francia eludes judgment, as he eludes any sort of clear definition. Everywhere the figure is surrounded by "a murk of distracted shadows and rumors." Under such conditions, says Carlyle, "who would pretend . . . to decipher the real portraiture of Dr. Francia and his life?" Those who wrote about him during the years of his reign had their reasons for treating him as they did, but out of their accounts Carlyle could draw "mere intricate inanity," "clouds of confused bluster and jargon," "not facts, but broken shadows of facts," and, not surprisingly, "a running shriek of constitutional denunciation."

Carlyle's tentative encomiums to Francia would seem the predictable expressions of an overheated hero-worshiper if they did not inform evaluations of the dictator that Roa appears, however ambivalently, to support. No more than Carlyle is Roa prepared to overlook the "reign of terror" instituted by Francia in the name of law and order; but no more, too, is he inclined to overlook the beneficent results of that reign, evident when one compares Paraguayan civil society in those years with conditions obtaining in countries like Brazil and Argentina. No doubt, as Fuentes says, Paraguay under Francia was "a sick utopia," a peaceful place not unlike a graveyard. But—so Carlyle reminds us—Francia was "driven by necessity itself" to what "was properly a reign of rigor" in a society that had neither popular institutions nor a class of citizens equipped to take effective control. In adapting to his novelistic purposes so many features of Carlyle's equivocal portrait, Roa has built a figure who is richly various, whose strengths of character and intelligence are inseparable from his sense of isolation and his impatience with the decorums of parliamentary and representative democracy.

Having in effect invited us to measure his character against alternative portraits of the dictator, Roa cannot be surprised when readers conclude that there is little new information to be found in *I The Supreme*. Nor is there much improvement on Carlyle's view of Francia as originally a noble fellow, a republican at heart who led his country to independence, only to end by "stealing the constitutional palladiums from their parliament-houses." None of the many thousands of words uttered by Francia in Roa's novel substantially revises or makes untenable that complex impression. And the standard 20th-century accounts of Francia's place in Paraguayan history are similarly reinforced in the novel. The dictator's decision to seal off the borders of his country to avoid contamination or incursion by its powerful neighbors, for example, is presented in the standard way, as an awful but probably necessary strategy to preserve independence. Roa allows for sharp expressions of disappointment in Francia, who clearly betrayed his own republican and populist ideals; but he is at one with other commentators who typically recall the perpetual wars that kept other countries in turmoil precisely because no leaders arose to prevent the Church and other corrupt interest groups from tearing to pieces what there was of a civil fabric.

With no desire, obviously, to revise conventional accounts of Francia's reign, Roa must have wished to accomplish something other than a scrupulously balanced historical portrait or a piece of political analysis. Fuentes's prediction that students of the decolonization process "will find much to reflect on in *I The Supreme*" suggests that there are fresh political insights in the novel. There are not. Roa's most audacious idea is the notion that Francia survived his own death in 1840. By having Francia anticipate at various points in the novel events that took place many years later, even going so far as to refer explicitly to a 1930s conflict with Bolivia, Roa in effect shows that Francia is implicated in every postindependence phase of Paraguayan history. But one has only to consult straightforward accounts of the country since 1816 to note that Francia is routinely accorded great attention; if the shadow he casts in the novel is disproportionately large, that is more a consequence of the fact that the work is a mostly first person narrative told by Francia himself than a sign that Roa reads the history of his country in a new way.

TO GET AT the real object of Roa's ambition it is perhaps necessary to consider the novel's peculiar organization. Principally *I The Supreme* is a record of exchanges between the Supreme and his private secretary or amanuensis, Policarpo Patiño. Patiño speaks so infrequently, however, that the "exchange" is in effect an interminable monologue that contains the interpolated utterances of an entirely marginal figure who exists mainly as a narrative device. In fact, the dictator may be said to "contain" Patiño just as he contains the many other figures whose complaints, encouragements, and solicitations he permits them to express as occasional voices trapped within his peremptory monologue.

Roa has no interest in the sort of psychological insight that would conclude from all of this simply that Francia was self-absorbed. The self-absorption here is a given, a device that underwrites or rationalizes narrative procedures. These procedures include the Supreme's recourse to a double persona, a *yo* and an *él*, in terms of which an interior debate is intermittently mounted. Exactly how the one persona is to be distinguished from the other cannot be definitively established, but it seems clear that the *él* is the more permanent incarnation of the Supreme, that aspect of him that exists in the world and in the minds of others, and is destined to have a posterity. The *yo* has more to do with the self for itself, though the notion of a private identity for a Supreme is not always persuasive.

But a description of the novel as a more or less continuous monologue, though accurate as far as it goes, is inadequate. For besides the disruptions and internal debates, there are also distinctly separate discourses within the book, distinctive styles of expression, each with its own designation. There are sections marked "in the private notebook," which ostensibly contain material written by the Supreme entirely for himself. There are sections marked "Perpetual Circular," which are dictated by the Supreme to Patiño and are intended to give

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orders and advice to state officials. Other sections are in the nature of citations or notes, some integrated within the main narrative (though typographically differentiated from it), others printed at the foot of pages and often containing lengthy excerpts from other books. There are also what might be called special discourses: the more or less extended testimony of another character, the transcript of an official document, and so on. These usually play an important role in the text, conveying necessary information or providing a background against which we can measure the reliability of subsequent remarks coming directly from the Supreme.

It is not always clear to the reader when one particular discourse has come to an end and another has begun. On occasion, what seems to be part of the "Perpetual Circular" sounds more like the intimate ruminations we associate with the private notebook. Elsewhere, the exchanges between the Supreme and Patiño carry over from one discourse to another, so that the separation into distinct discourses seems no more than a self-canceling, transparent artifice enforcing the utter fictionality and arbitrariness of the whole enterprise. Ostensibly put together by a "compiler"—who, in a final note, reveals that it was "culled" or "coaxed" "from some twenty thousand dossiers" and all manner of other documents—the novel is best described as a polyphonic narrative whose perspective is only superficially controlled by a presiding presence.

But what is it exactly that this novel of many voices has to say? What is the nature of the society over which the Supreme ruled, and what has Roa's view of that society to tell us about politics and power? The relation established in *I The Supreme* between the dictator and his people is an all too conventional one: the people assume the status of inert objects and the dictator assumes the dimensions of a protean figure. No matter that the dictator now and again refers to his people as "proud, dignified citizens." What is familiar is the easy contempt for ordinary decorums routinely displayed by the dictator in mundane transactions with constituents. But if we are led to ask whether the citizens of newly independent Paraguay deserved better, Roa's novel provides no answer: it allows us to believe what we like about the nature of ordinary people and about the institutions best suited to representing their interests. Roa keeps his eye trained on a single situation, but we never feel that we know much about early Paraguayan society and how it worked; generalizations about politics and power from *I The Supreme* inevitably go beyond anything Roa is willing to provide.

Is it fair to say, then, that politics in *I The Supreme* is merely a background for Roa's portrait of an eccentric dictator with an extraordinary gift for words? Readers will obviously differ on what may be made of the political material. At a number of points the Supreme refers to atrocities he is said to have committed, defending himself in various ways. He refers to trials, to the undoubted existence of traitors, to the fact that some of those accused of crimes against the state were not found guilty. He also defends himself by resorting to numbers. How many political executions actually took place in the years of his reign? Patiño says that 68 conspirators were put to death in 1820, and the Supreme himself sets the figure for his entire reign at "less than a hundred."

It is hard to judge the accuracy of these claims, but it does seem clear that Francia never embarked on a course of systematic extermination. Do the numbers matter? Can they serve political judgment? Though they cannot tell us that Francia's was a humane stewardship, or that he cultivated in his constituents generally a respect for what would now be called human rights, they clearly say something about his reign and his character. Still, we must believe that in the real world of politics numbers do matter, that an isolated instance of official misconduct acquires special significance when it may rightly be seen as part of a larger pattern of systematic oppression or terror. The recent memoir of Armando Valladares recounting his experiences in Castro's prisons is important as a political document because it tells us a great deal about the fate of tens of thousands in Cuba for 25 years. Francia's human rights record seems at least to have been better than Castro's; on the other hand, in a more primitive society like Francia's Paraguay, there may have been less need to organize repression and systematize terror.

FINALLY THE POLITICS of this novel cannot be evaluated in isolation from Roa's conception of language. Like other contemporary writers, Roa uses multiple personae and alternate voices in order to avoid any suggestion that truth is to be identified with a single character or a simple idea. His prose is saturated with the idiom, the rhetoric, the word play of other writers and other languages. When the Supreme speaks we hear now Baudelaire or Montaigne, now Blake or Shakespeare or Rabelais. Allusions proliferate, the sources not always clear or important, but the fact of intertextual borrowing unmistakable. Now and then exotic Paraguayan terms or Guaraní (Indian) words (translated in a special appendix) are freely intermingled with sophisticated literary phrases or bits and pieces of a Rousseauist philosophical vocabulary. Explicit references to and borrowings from Greek and Latin texts support an ongoing sense of language as anachronistic, capacious, and vigorously opportunistic.

CHICHIKOV'S DRIVER

With the reins around his right hand, which is deformed,
an extra finger, he banks the horses through an opening in the trees.
The dew soaks his shoulder.

At the inn he smells a burnt taper snuffed out by another like himself.

The dead can be bought & sold. They dance on the rim of a coin
minted for the Czar. On the coin is a woman with a shock of wheat.

The horses splash their huge faces in the trough.

Above, at a window stands a woman who has been dreaming of a hand
with a moonstone on each finger, just a perfect detached hand.

Is this still her dream, a troika's black shape inside her hand?

She wants to drop a gown still warm with sleep down on the driver
nodding his head & chirping the names of the horses
as if they were his kids *Nikolai, Alexei* & *Sasha*.

RICHARD LYONS

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We do not infer from this that for Roa all cultures are exercised by the same dilemmas and all languages more or less interchangeable in their expression of basic ideas and sentiments. We conclude, rather, that language in *I The Supreme* is an instrument for expressing difference and discontinuity, for demonstrating the radical incompatibility of various cultural norms and literary conventions. The novel brings together a wide range of flagrantly contradictory idioms and assembles them in a way that is often disorienting and deliberately provocative. It does this persistently because it wishes to subvert the procedures by which facts and otherwise familiar impressions are routinely processed and accommodated. And this project constitutes the novel's essential politics.

The Supreme himself goes so far as to deny the importance of words, and asserts that his investment in writing is intrinsically ridiculous. "When all is said and done," he laments, "what is prodigious, fearful, unknown in the human being has never been put into words or books, and never will be." To write is inevitably to falsify. "When I dictate to you," Francia tells Patiño, "the words have a meaning; when you write them another. So that we speak two different languages." But ultimately the novel lives most fully in its language, and it implicitly struggles against the negations insisted upon by Francia himself.

IF THE SUPREME is obsessed with his failure to communicate his own authentic cry, and concludes that we understand nothing, we feel nonetheless that a great deal comes through. If to Francia it is "all the better" that no one understands, since then he can feel free to say and write anything he pleases, it is clear to us that he is served by language as much as he is betrayed by it. When Francia declares "I don't write history. I make it," he announces a distinction that persuades no one, least of all Francia himself. For it is precisely the written record that he wants desperately to affect, in order to defend his motives and thoughts from "those rodents" whose "error consists in gnawing holes in documented truth."

To make history is for Francia, whatever he says to the contrary, a matter of "adjusting, stressing, enriching its meaning and truth." Roa's novel affirms the significance of the project even as, in its ambivalent manner, it exposes and undercuts the dictator himself. If the only enduring monument to Francia is an edifice of language known as *I The Supreme*, it is fair to say that his words, or the words he inspired, are at the heart of that edifice. Francia and Patiño may "disappear in what is read/written," like the rest of us, but always there remains the possibility that language, more properly literature, will accomplish a purpose that warrants the hope and the labor invested in it.

No reader will feel upon first acquaintance with *I The Supreme* that he has adequately come to grips with the novel, or that he can say how well its eccentric, introspective intensities are balanced by a feeling for the surfaces and conflicts of ordinary life. Edmund Wilson wrote many years ago that even when Joyce and Proust turned their sights upon social or moral life, one felt they were giving us an "exercise . . . of the pure intelligence playing luminously all about but not driven by the motor power of any hope and not directed by any creative imagination for the possibilities of human life." It is tempting to think of Roa in these terms. Some have found him a different sort of writer, even going so far as to read his book as a political novel, as an attack upon Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, Paraguay's current dictator.

But though Roa's universe is ventilated by strong winds blowing through the sometimes close and tangled thickets of Francia's mind, it is largely what Wilson calls "the shuttered house" of the imagination that we chiefly feel we inhabit. For all the interest we take in the texture of the prose and the virtuosity of the various narrative devices, we are not always certain that the insight achieved is commensurate with the fantastic energy expended on its behalf. Nor are we certain that there is sufficient dramatic development in a work that has more than its share of verbal energy and schematic brilliance. There is no doubting the extraordinary magnitude of Roa's enterprise, but the precise nature of his achievement will be debated for many years to come.

ROBERT BOYERS

Robert Boyers is editor of *Salmagundi* and professor of English at Skidmore College. His most recent book is *Atrocity and Amnesia: The Political Novel Since 1945* (Oxford University Press).

QUITE CONTRARY

The Cult of the Virgin Mary: Psychological Origins by Michael P. Carroll

(Princeton University Press, 253 pp., $25)

I regard psychoanalysis as a revealed religion. Like Islam and Catholicism, for example, it is a self-referential and unfalsifiable system. Like them, it is based on insights from honored individuals about a non-observable world, rather than on a body of repeated experiments and proofs. I mention this not as a derogation—I am neither philosophically dazzled by the empirical sciences, nor particularly skeptical about epistemologies that attempt to rise above the cataloging of earthly cause and effect—but to explain why I can recommend reading a book filled with inaccurate and misleading information.

A study of the cult of the Virgin Mary from a psychoanalytic perspective (which is what Michael P. Carroll has written) is the equivalent of one from a Muslim point of view: an adherent of one revealed religion examines the behavior of adherents of another. It is the viewpoint itself that is most interesting in such a case, not the "facts" of the phenomenon under investigation. Readers who hear the resonance of fundamental truth in Carroll's basic assumption that "all sons come to develop a sexual desire for their mother and, driven by castration anxiety, feel that this desire must be repressed" will find the work insightful and informative in the way he intended; those, like myself, for whom this statement has the sound (and fascination) of a tenet of somebody else's belief system will enjoy it as a tract by one philosophy about another.

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The first part of Carroll's book develops the hypotheses that (1) the cult of Mary allows the dissipation of strongly repressed sexual desire for the mother in an acceptable way; (2) "the distinctive features" of the cult have been shaped over the centuries "primarily by the son's strong but strongly repressed desire for his mother"; (3) "identifying strongly with the Virgin Mary allows women to experience vicariously the fulfillment of their desire for sexual contact with, and a baby from, their fathers." Although these desires of sons and daughters are universal, according to the author, they are particularly pronounced in "father-ineffective families," which are especially prevalent in southern Europe around the Mediterranean due to economic conditions such as "chronic" unemployment. This is why, according to Carroll, the cult of the Virgin is so strong there, and has been since about the fifth century, when—in his view—these circumstances first obtained.

The second part of the book deals with specific apparitions (at Lourdes, Fátima, Guadelupe, and so on), and attempts an explanation of their origins. This is oddly unrelated to the first part, since the explanations for the specific visions have little to do with the general hypotheses developed earlier, and instead rely on rather mundane observations about the personal lives of the seers, such as deceased parents or spouses or squalid living conditions. Some of these observations seem sensible and well taken, although I am always surprised that the miraculous or wondrous element of something is thought to be dissipated when an element of personal relevance or benefit is introduced. The fact that the virgin she saw reminded Bernadette Soubirous of a beloved godmother could logically indicate many things other than hallucinatory projection; those who believe in such apparitions might reasonably suppose that the Virgin would appear to children in comforting and familiar forms. And the memory or retelling of a real event might well be merged with, or affected by, memories or associations of other real events. To my knowledge, nobody has ever claimed that those who experience apparitions are transformed by them into unimpeachable witnesses.

SOME OF CARROLL'S analysis is rather silly. Perhaps it is merely predictable that a Freudian should find phallic imagery and erotic symbolism in the Blessed Ossana's vision of the nails of the Crucifixion piercing her heart. But to see Saint Rose of Lima's kissing the wound in Christ's side as "decidedly erotic" seems perverse: How frequently is kissing a wound a component of human sexuality? Is not the maternal instinct to kiss a child's hurt finger a more apt and empirically supportable analogy? (If the symbolism must be sexual, and if shape is the paramount clue, surely lesbianism must be considered here; Carroll's failure to entertain this possibility is doubtless related to his overwhelming lack of attention to female perspectives throughout.)

I can accept Carroll's suggestion that an 11-year-old boy who saw a vision of a small woman and threatened to drive her away with blows was hallucinating vengeance against his cruel mother, but I find it hard to imagine why he would identify her with the Virgin Mary, of all people, and I don't see how this would account for the fact that an unrelated 15-year-old girl on the hillside with him had the same vision. Similarly, the proposal that Juan Diego's vision of the Virgin of Guadelupe was a nostalgic hallucination of his dead wife sounds plausible, until it slips out that there is no proof that Juan Diego ever had a wife, at which point one wonders whether the faithful are any more fanciful in upholding Mary's apparitions than their critics are in debunking them.

Carroll's reasoning and deduction are so shallow and careless that he makes you wonder if, in his jumping to conclusions, he has caught the spirit from the seers. From the credible statement, "It is said that the *valtienti* [a Mary cult in Italy] once dealt blows to themselves," he proceeds to the wholly unwarranted assumption a few lines later that "until recently at least the *valtienti* were expected to beat themselves." He selects a few of many legends about the Madonna of the Arch, acknowledges that one of those he has chosen does not match his theory, and summarizes that the theory accounts for "most of the data." And efforts to quantify exacerbate the problem. Sixty-seven percent, which sounds quite clear and exact, is the bottom line in one column of a table on "Emphasis upon the Virgin Mary, in Contrast to Saints and Angels, in the Religious Folklore of Ireland and Spain"—but what this figure *means* is not at all clear. Those who take the trouble to analyze its actual derivation will find it useless. In order to demonstrate that visions of women seers correspond to an Oedipal desire to have a child by one's father, Carroll adduces the presence of *any* adult male in the vision—whatever his age or religious significance—as evidence, but even so finds that only 50 percent of the 20 apparitions he has chosen for his sample match his profile. Undaunted, however, he pronounces this correlation "strong and statistically significant."

Such misrepresentations are less serious than two more fundamental miscalculations that underlie Carroll's entire discussion. Although his theory accounts to some extent for both sexes, Carroll states at times, and implies throughout, that sons in father-ineffective families are the major force behind the rise and the evolution of the cult of Mary. Yet he never demonstrates that males predominate in the veneration of Mary, either numerically (for example, in the sodalities he describes) or through influence in the areas where the cult is most popular (Italy and Spain). I suspect that he could not so demonstrate. I am reasonably sure that there are many more women involved in the cult of Mary everywhere, and that if its spirituality reflects any particular constituency, it is a female one. Of course, it is presided over by a male clergy; but that is less significant, I think, than the fact that Catholics of both sexes learn about spirituality as children primarily from their mothers and from nuns.

HIS MOST PROFOUND misunderstanding is certainly his constant reference to Mary as a supernatural being, a goddess, or an independent deity. This may be a predictable result of his sectarian perspective, but even minimal standards of scholarly objectivity ought to have inspired Carroll to a greater sophistication. It is a common objection to Catholicism that the faithful treat Mary as a deity; and it would have been interesting if Carroll had marshaled data to support this (usually Protestant) claim. No such evidence is supplied, however, and the assertion is simply wrong.

If the members of a tribe described a venerated holy man or an ancestor as a human being, and agreed not to accord him the worship they accorded their gods, it would be an error of fact for an anthropologist to characterize him as a deity in the tribal pantheon—at least without demonstrating that the native informants could not be trusted, since it is from them that one would normally

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derive information about their religion. Carroll may have personal reasons for questioning the honor Catholics bestow on Mary, but he offers no justification for disregarding the clear and unanimous opinion of the native informants that Mary is not a divine being. While few of the faithful can sort out the theological tangles of the Trinity or the persons in Christ, at least the theological significance of the human mother of Christ as intercessor for other humans is concrete and comprehensible enough for the simplest Catholic. Carroll cites not a shred of evidence to justify his contrary assumption. Like the Christian claim that Muslims worship Mohammed, the notion that Catholics worship Mary is a sectarian misprision and a historical falsehood. As a psychoanalytic observation, moreover, it is useless—it is not even intriguing—without some clarification of what it means to claim that devout Catholics "worship" Mary as divine, in the face of the unanimous and unequivocal religious teaching that prohibits such worship.

JOHN BOSWELL

John Boswell is the author most recently of *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (University of Chicago Press).

COLLECTIBLES

The Havemeyers: Impressionism Comes to America by Frances Weitzenhoffer

(Abrams, 384 pp., $37.50)

Dr. Claribel and Miss Etta by Brenda Richardson

(Baltimore Museum of Art, 204 pp., $24.95)

A formidable platoon of well-endowed ladies led the march of serious European art into American private collections and museums: Mrs. Henry O. Havemeyer, Mrs. Potter Palmer, Mary Cassatt, Gertrude Stein, and the two Cone sisters from Baltimore, Claribel and Etta. While it took her a long time to reach her stride, Louisine Elder, who became Mrs. Havemeyer, began collecting as early as 1875 in Paris, with the prescient and lucky purchase of a Degas and a Monet. The luck came from her friendship with Mary Cassatt, who had arrived in Paris a year earlier, and who tutored her friend's eye according to her own talented and awakening perceptions of the newest art.

A generation later, the young, wealthy, culture-hungry Cone sisters found a soul mate and docent already established in Paris to guide their taste. She was Gertrude Stein, whose salon and style of living helped to promote the success of modernism during its first wave. The two Cones, like Stein herself, were models of early 20th-century emancipated womanhood. They remained unmarried, and seemed susceptible to innocent and not-so-innocent emotional and physical attachments, which were certainly not uncommon among Victorian and Edwardian ladies with similar backgrounds. Louisine Havemeyer, despite her artistic nature, and her close friendship with Mary Cassatt, chose marriage to a powerful industrialist and mothered three children. Only sometime after the death of her husband, Henry, in 1907 did she temper some of the rigidity of her social position and emerge as a leader of militant feminism in the suffragette era.

The separate stories of the Havemeyers and the Cones are recounted in two recent books: *The Havemeyers: Impressionism Comes to America* by Frances Weitzenhoffer, and *Dr. Claribel and Miss Etta* by Brenda Richardson, a publication of the Baltimore Museum of Art, in which the Cone Collection resides. Both books are exemplary pieces of art-historical research, and of social history as well. Since both are written by women, and are primarily about the careers of other women, I find it necessary these days to add that neither book exhibits the least tendency to approach its subject from a "feminist" point of view. Weitzenhoffer and Richardson have availed themselves of the massive documentary archives of correspondence and memoirs that survive (fortunately) in both cases. They have conducted extensive interviews with still-living friends and relatives of these collectors, in order to record what remains of their oral histories.

Why should this be done at all? For a start, the collecting of art is a subject whose time has certainly come, judging by the frantically escalating art market, as well as by our society's preoccupation with the art museum as a new center of our cultural lives. The collections of the Metropolitan Museum in New York would be inconceivable without the Havemeyer bequest. So stupendous, so fundamental to the museum's holdings was this gift of 1930 that only the enlightened dispersal of its parts throughout the museum has kept the collection less known to the general public than, say, the collection of Robert Lehman, who egotistically demanded his own wing. (Not to speak of Henry Clay Frick, who established and endowed a private house museum.)

El Greco's *View of Toledo*, Goya's *Majas on the Balcony*, several Rembrandts, a dozen or more world famous works by Degas, Manet's *Boating*, many great Courbets and Corots, and Daumier's *Third Class Carriage*: these are just some of the treasures of this great hoard. And there were other treasures that stayed in the family; they became part of daughter Electra Havemeyer Webb's own museum at Shelburne, Vermont, or were given to the National Gallery in Washington, or came into the market at record-breaking auctions in recent years. And the Cone sisters also provided the centerpiece of a museum. Baltimore's collection is hard to imagine without their bequest. While not quite in the same league of "masterpiece accumulation" as the Havemeyers, the Cones concentrated particularly on the work of Matisse, an artist whose reputation has never been higher and who seems to us now the quintessential 20th-century master.

The influence of Mary Cassatt on the formation of the Havemeyer collection is a fascinating subplot; it is itself an important chapter in the history of taste that Weitzenhoffer admirably unfolds. Richardson does the same for the powerful influence of Gertrude Stein in the lives of the Cone sisters. (Stein's famous story "Two Women" was based on the Cones.) But it is important to remember the independence of judgment and the originality of taste of these women themselves, all

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the help they had notwithstanding. The Havemeyers, husband and wife (Henry was a major force, although a conservative one, in forming the collection), bought sometimes without Cassatt's advice, and sometimes against it. Fortunately, Louisine Havemeyer ignored her old friend's eccentric and perverse rejection of Cézanne after the artist's death in 1906, and her egregious tip to sell all of his paintings before they lost their value. Etta Cone confirmed that she never was able to understand Cubism; thus she did not collect Picasso with the seriousness with which she collected Matisse, much against Gertrude Stein's counsel. (Stein dropped Matisse from her collection and her salon after an early friendship cooled.)

Nevertheless it was Gertrude Stein with whom both Cone sisters corresponded avidly and to whom they confided, and Stein's own celebrated collection certainly provided a role model for Claribel and Etta. In the case of the Havemeyers, while Mary Cassatt was not herself a collector, she was on the spot in Paris and served as an inspired scout who checked out and informed her friends of the best things that came onto the market. It was Cassatt of course who introduced El Greco to the Havemeyers, with such stunning results.

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Cassatt's influence also extended to the activities of the one member of our bustled platoon who is not directly a subject of these books, Mrs. Potter Palmer of Chicago. Still, Weitzenhoffer devotes generous space and attention to her collecting career as it crossed and recrossed the career of the Havemeyers. One wishes for a thorough account of the Potter Palmer collection, and of its social history. In fact, "Impressionism Comes to America" applies more accurately to Potter Palmer than it does to the Havemeyers. The Havemeyers' collection of old masters and 19th-century art was, except for Degas, not primarily focused on the Impressionists; indeed, Louisine Havemeyer positively disliked Renoir, and regretted being pushed to acquire the only one of his paintings she owned (the important *By the Seashore*) somewhat against her will. Henry Havemeyer, a sugar tycoon, was attracted, like others of his generation among American super-rich acquisitors, to the great names of the old masters, particularly Rembrandt and Goya. As for the 19th century in France, he seems genuinely to have loved Courbet's work; and thanks to him the Metropolitan Museum has a stunning group of the best of Courbet's work outside Paris.

It was Henry who conducted most of the negotiations with the firm of Durand-Ruel, the art dealers who really did bring Impressionism to America, along with a great deal more of high quality. As much as we can admire Henry Havemeyer for what he did in fact acquire—with his wife's prodding and, sometimes, conspiring—we can sympathize with Durand-Ruel's chagrin at being told over and over again, after having produced the best pictures and given the best advice, that the price was too high or that their client couldn't make up his mind. The Havemeyers were lucky to have landed in the hands of Paul Durand-Ruel, a man of absolute integrity as well as taste; not all the ambitious American collectors of the day fell into the clutches of Bernard Berenson, who used to call them "squillionaires."

AT THE PEAK of their activities as collectors, about 1890, the Havemeyers occupied a Fifth Avenue mansion that they commissioned from the architect Charles Haight, with interiors designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany and Samuel Coleman. With the collections installed, with its "flying staircase" and gallery and its Moorish and stained glass elements, its gilding and mosaics, it surely was the outstanding *gesamkunstwerk* of its era in America—comparable, say, to the Stoclet Palace in Brussels by Joseph Hoffman, which also housed an important collection. In 1907 Bernard and Mary Berenson finally visited 1 East 66th Street, which was the competition of their client and benefactress Isabella Stewart Gardner's Fenway Court in Boston. Mary Berenson had this to say to her diary: "Saw the Havemeyer things—an awful Tiffany house!—Rembrandts, Monets, Degases ad infinitum—no real taste . . . ." (We are not told how this great house came to its end, or how the few decorative elements that survive were saved and collected. Weitzenhoffer's book ends rather abruptly with Louisine Havemeyer's death and great bequest.)

Since these books are not only biographies of persons but also accounts of things—of works of art, their assemblage and their subsequent fate—one misses most from the Havemeyer volume some attempt to give a complete account of the known collection. Considering the enormous amount of documentary material Weitzenhoffer deployed, a checklist would have been invaluable. Instead, we have a pleasant miscellany of plates that sometimes connect with the text and sometimes do not, stressing color plates of works recently on the market and giving a somewhat unbalanced overview of the collection as a whole. This is perhaps a fault of the publisher, who neglected to provide the kind of tight editing such a book deserves. (Terborch is given as Terburg, following the French usage, but no other artists' names are given in the French; Monet and Manet are mixed up inexcusably; and so on.) Still, this is a valuable book on an important subject.

It may have been somewhat surprising that the Metropolitan Museum received the bulk of the Havemeyer's art, since Henry was consciously snubbed by its J. P. Morgan-dominated board. It was not surprising, but noteworthy nonetheless, that Baltimore received the Cone pictures after Etta's death in 1949. Claribel's will of 1929 urged that the joint collection go there only "in the event the spirit of appreciation for modern art in Baltimore become improved." Her second choice was New York's Metropolitan Museum, but she left final and total discretion to Etta, who was wooed by many suitors, including MOMA's Alfred Barr. Claribel, a doctor of medicine, who curiously stayed in Germany throughout World War I, remains a somewhat enigmatic figure. Etta, who was supposed to be the less

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talented sister, emerges extremely well from Richardson's pages, as a wonderful personality and a considerable collector in her own right after Claribel's death. There are gaps in the story, but they may be explained by the surprising revelation in a footnote that in 1959, and again in 1963, the museum lent to a Cone relative hundreds of original documents that were never returned. And here too, while the book is accompanied by a generous selection of plates, there is not even a list of the collection as a whole. We are, however, promised a new and complete Cone catalogue raisonné; it is a duty the museum should not put off too long.

E. V. THAW

TRB, *from page 4*

Owen. "You can hardly go to a railroad station and make a telephone call." Steel agreed that this was "a major issue.")

Owen, matinee-idol handsome, is also the closest thing in Britain to an American-style blow-dried image-obsessed neoliberal presidential candidate, though he could debate any one of them under the table. Steel gives the impression of being along for the ride. The official Alliance campaign poster features "the two Davids" in rakish crewneck sweaters. Tchaikovsky is playing each morning as you enter the press conference. The room is yellow, to match the campaign paraphernalia, which are all designer black-on-yellow. The two Davids kicked off their campaign by flying around the country in an airplane—an innovation much remarked upon, not always favorably.

The Labour auditorium is grungy and smoke-filled. (Over at Alliance HQ there are yellow "no smoking" signs.) No music. A large illustration of a rose, the party's symbol, dominates the stage, in a concession to modishness that seems less than heartfelt. Critics find Labour leader Neil Kinnock's attempts to repackage his party's substantive message similarly unconvincing. Labour's manifesto (platform) is calculatedly vague. Instead of nationalization, it refers to "social ownership by a variety of means."

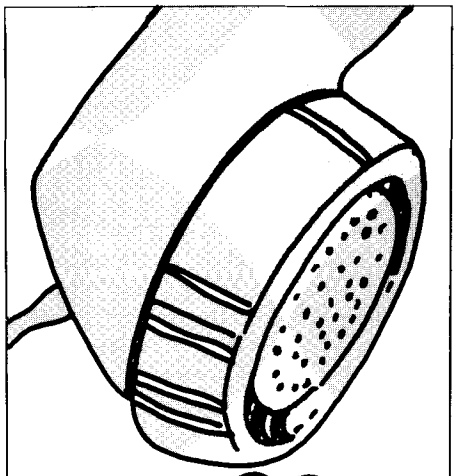
The issue of the day recently was Labour's promise, if elected, to create a Cabinet-level "Ministry of Women." Kinnock explained that this ministry would promote legislation requiring a "leave package" for all workers including "maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, and leave for family reasons." I was wondering how much time all this leave would leave for working, but someone else asked instead: Why a Ministry of Women but not a Ministry of Ethnic Minorities? Kinnock assured that the Ministry of Women would be deeply involved in ethnic-minority issues since half of all ethnic minorities are women.

Poor Kinnock. The only party leader with any genuine human warmth or charm, he must negotiate a course between Labour's hard core and a more moderate electorate that makes the challenge to America's Democrats seem like easy sailing. He gets a bad press and has turned bitter about it. Asked about alleged Nazi tactics by some local Labour politicians in London, he replied: "One way in which the Nazis were able to advance was through inaccurate reporting." Ridiculed as a "Welsh windbag," he is actually a pleasure to listen to. Haven't the Tories struggled hard with unemployment? They haven't "struggled," they've "juggled," he replied, Jesse Jackson-style. "We don't have delusions of grandeur or intimations of immortality about going on and on and on. This will deliver our enemies into our hands."

In an effort to rebut the megalomania charge, Thatcher brought her whole Cabinet to her kickoff press conference, a wonderful collection of middle-aged male faces arrayed across the stage like the Politburo. The effect was not as intended. More like a trainer calling on her dogs to perform their tricks.

Thatcher is irrepressibly bossy. She can't seem to stop herself from using the royal "we" when she means "I" and the egocentric "I" when she ought to say "we," such as in referring to ostensibly collective Cabinet decisions. A reporter asked: How can you be satisfied with such high unemployment? "But I did not say we were satisfied or complacent," she scolded, followed by a complacent list of past achievements, reference to a pamphlet that lists them in more glorious detail, and the admonition: "Will you very kindly read this?" A defiant smile. Next question?

She was prepared with a graceful joke when asked about her "on and on" gaffe, but couldn't bring herself to leave it at that. "We intend to fight for a third term, fight on and on to the end of every day. But I expect to be very fit at the end of that term." Clearly she does plan to go on and on, and she doesn't even need a constitutional amendment to do it.



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BOSTON DIARIST

Sporting News

SUMMER'S ALMOST HERE, and the Celtics are in the playoffs. Thanks to my friend Barry Kaplovitz, who has season tickets, I'm in the front row at Boston Garden, maybe ten feet behind the backboard. Professional basketball is a beautiful game, full of flowing patterns and joyous jumping. Seeing it this close up one is electrified by the sheer physicality of it. The guards dart and dance; the tall centers loom like Easter Island statues. Kaplovitz is a political and marketing consultant who thinks the Gary Hart story was a press atrocity. Just for fun—his fun, not mine—he introduces me to the other regulars as "Rick Hertzberg, from the *Miami Herald*." In consequence, I am unmercifully razzed. "So what brings you here? Trying to catch Larry Bird in bed with somebody?" That kind of thing, over and over. Good game, though. The Celtics win.

WITH THE PUBLICATION of the Gary 'n' Donna vacation snapshots in the *National Enquirer*, the 1988 presidential "character" story has at last found its natural level. But before the story takes its place on that big front page in the sky, there to join such other all-time greats as the *Boston American*'s Toodles and Honey Fitz Fitzgerald story (1913) and the *New York Evening Graphic*'s Peaches and Daddy Browning story (1926), a couple of final examples of press pathology deserve to be recorded. The first concerns the *Washington Post* and its lead political reporter, Paul Taylor. It was Taylor of the *Post* (not some hireling of Rupert Murdoch or Lyndon LaRouche) who achieved a Fawn Hall-like 15 minutes of fame by asking Hart the two key questions, "Do you consider adultery immoral?" and "Have you ever committed adultery?" Taylor has now offered his apologia, in the form of a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*. The letter is written in the slangy, regular-guy style much prized at the *Post* ("Let's review the bidding here," "What in heaven's name are these guys talking about?" etc.). Taylor's argument is essentially that Hart asked for it, both by fooling around after telling his staff he wouldn't, and by saying, after the *Miami Herald* scoop, that he'd done nothing "immoral." But there's another explanation for Taylor's line of questioning. Six hours after Taylor popped his questions, the *Post*, as he boasted in his story the next day, "presented a top campaign aide with documented evidence of a recent liaison between Hart and a Washington woman with whom he has had a long-term relationship." Given that, it looks very much as if Taylor's real reason for asking Hart if he had ever committed adultery was to elicit a denial and thus to establish a "cover-up" rationale for going with the "recent liaison" story the *Post* was sitting on. This proved unnecessary, in the event, because Hart decided to drop out of the race, in exchange for which the *Post* agreed not to print the name of the "Washington woman." I'm sure there is a moral distinction between this transaction and simple blackmail, though it escapes me for the moment.

BY THE WAY, according to rumor (or "persistent reports," as the *Post* would say), the "documented evidence" of the "recent liaison" was in fact collected by a private eye hired by a jealous husband, himself a prominent politician. So here we have a new "role" for the press: adjudicating the love triangles of the rich and famous.

TAYLOR WROTE TO the *Times* because the *Times*'s Anthony Lewis had named him as the questioner, and because Lewis, William Safire, Tom Wicker, Russell Baker, and former executive editor A. M. Rosenthal, in a rare display of op-ed unanimity, had all deplored the *Post*'s and the *Miami Herald*'s handling of the story. (The *Times*'s sixth columnist, Flora Lewis, whose specialty is foreign affairs, merely reported Europe's bafflement that such things were considered serious news.) But in its own coverage, the *Times* went haywire, too. On Monday, May 5, the day after the *Herald*'s big score, the *Times* confined itself to a story on page A16 under the discreet headline "PAPER AND HART IN DISPUTE OVER ARTICLE." On Monday, May 6, though, the newspaper of record kicked out the jams. At the top of page one was a glamorous publicity still captioned, "Portrait of Donna Rice purchased from a Miami photographer who asked not to be identified." The story, headlined "AN ACTRESS IN TURMOIL," was not yet six paragraphs old when it hit pay dirt: "Three years ago she posed partially nude for a photograph used to publicize a Miami-area country-western saloon, standing at a bar in jeans and"—here the story jumped, forcing the reader to turn with trembling fingers to page B6, column 5—"a cowboy hat, with a Confederate flag draped across her front." Hubba hubba! At the end of the story was a box headed "HOW PICTURES WERE OBTAINED" that bragged breathlessly that "The New York Times yesterday purchased two pictures, about three years old, of Donna Rice, an actress and model identified as the woman in the controversy embroiling former Senator Gary Hart. . . . The photos were exclusively provided to The Times by a photographer who insisted on anonymity." For some reason the *Times* printed only one of the pictures, the head shot. The Confederate flag one was omitted. Space considerations, probably. I describe all this because it appeared only in early editions, such as the one we get in Boston. By the time of the late edition, the one most New Yorkers (and most *Times* staffers) see, the publicity still had been replaced by a news photo and the box had been pulled. Future researchers looking for those exclusive pix will scan the microfilm in vain; only the late edition lives in history. A close shave. I mean, I'm all for *glasnost*, but could it be that de-Rosenthalization has gone too far?

ON MEMORIAL DAY, on a diamond hard by the trolley tracks in Brookline, a pickup team consisting of five fortyish pencil pushers (TNR house liberal Robert Kuttner, Boston public TV newsie Christopher Lydon, *Harvard Business Review* cum *Dissent* editor Bernard Avishai, American history free agent Alan Brinkley, and your Diarist) takes on a pickup team consisting of five junior high and high school boys plus one first-year medical student (good field, no hit). Sandlot softball under the open sky: the kind of thing that can happen only in America. Or only in America, Japan, Taiwan, the Dominican Republic, or Cuba. With three home runs and ten RBI's, Kuttner powers the A.K.s to a 27-25 victory. But after a disputed play, we are astounded by a jeer from one of the kids: "Ahhh, yer muthah writes for the *Miami Herald*!"

H. H.

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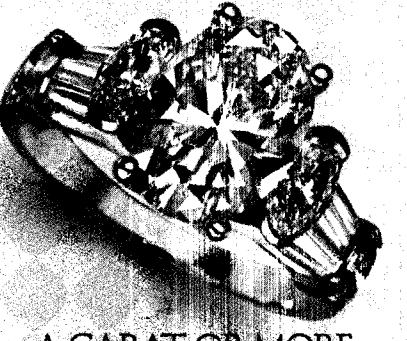

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